PORFIRIO DIAZ

SEVEN TIMES PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE

PORFIRIO DIAZ

SEVEN TIMES PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

MEXICO AS I SAW IT.
SUNNY SICILY.
BEHIND THE FOOTLIGHTS.
A GIRL'S RIDE IN ICELAND.
A WINTER JAUNT TO NORWAY.
THROUGH FINLAND IN CARTS.
DANISH VERSUS ENGLISH . . .
BUTTER MAKING.
GEORGE HARLEY, F.R.S., or, THE
LIFE OF A PHYSICIAN.
Etc., etc.

A la señora Alec
Iwedie Sol
Porfirio Díaz
1904.

PORFIRIO DIAZ,

SEVEN TIMES PRESIDENT OF MEXICO

BY
MRS. ALEC TWEEDIE
(née Harley)

With over 100 Illustrations
and a Map

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THE
CHAPEL
RIVER
PRESS
KINGSTON
SURREY

INTRODUCTION.

It may seem strange that I, an English woman, should write the life of the President of Mexico, so a word of explanation is advisable. In 1900, I looked up the map of the world for a good subject for a book, and Mexico seemed to offer all I wanted —history, romance, picturesqueness, beauty.

Armed with introductions, six delightful months were spent in that country. From north to south, from east to west, I penetrated, and when journeys into wild parts where white people were practically unknown might prove dangerous, General Diaz kindly gave me an escort of soldiers—usually supplemented by officials, members of the Senate, engineers, and friends who seized such an opportunity to explore the country. On one occasion a party of forty soldiers, twenty-two gentlemen and myself rode for ten consecutive days through the mountains, visiting ancient Aztec temples, and stopping at large coffee, sugar, or tobacco estates by the way.

"Mexico as I Saw It" was the result; it had considerable success both in England and America.

In the autumn of 1904 the prospect of some delightful visits tempted me back to the United States, and while there a telegram from the President of Mexico drew me further south.

Longing to write his biography, at last one day I broached the subject. At first his modesty said "No," for General Diaz thinks too humbly of himself, too highly of his neighbour. Finally, with Madame Diaz' kindly persuasion added to my own, he agreed to my doing so before I left his capital, and wrote me the charming letter translated on the following page, confirming that permission :

Mexico, November 23rd, 1904.

DEAR MRS. TWEEDIE,—

As the book you published, entitled "Mexico as I Saw It," is not only a proof of the veracity which has distinguished your publications, but is also a good guarantee that the same conditions will exist in the forthcoming description of the people, places, and races with which your next book will deal, I have no hesitation in placing in your hands documentary facts demonstrating the progress of this country, and also those which appertain to myself, which may be made public through the medium of your intelligent and facile pen.

With my most sincere thanks for the devotion you have shown in this undertaking,

I remain,

Your most sincere

PORFIRIO DIAZ.

"Why this kindness?" people may ask.

Simply because he thought I had done something for his country in "Mexico as I Saw It," and because I did not want to be commissioned or paid for my work—but undertook it as an independent person, and a friend. Simple reasons, but they won his heart, and I can only regret my own inability to draw his character more dramatically for the world. He deserves the pen of a John Morley, who has so graphically given us the characteristics and personality of a statesman in his "Life of Gladstone," whom in some ways Diaz resembles. He resembles him in his quiet simplicity, the charm of his home life, and his keen interest in many varied subjects.

By the hour, day after day, during my visit, the President, Madame Diaz and I talked. They knew I could not remain long in Mexico—not six months as previously—and they gave much of their time to help me.

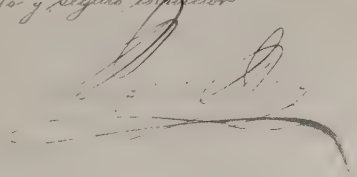
When I could not trust myself to follow technical matters in Spanish, she translated glibly, and this three-cornered conver-

Noviembre 23 de 1901

Apreciable Señora Quevedo:

Como el libro de Ud. "Mexico as I saw it" no solo es una muestra de la escrupulosa veracidad que distingue sus publicaciones, sino también una [illegible] que le mismo conduce: confiado á Ud. describir la gente, razas y lugares, de cuya narración es su propósito ocuparse, no tengo inconveniente en poner en sus manos los documentos que se refieren á hechos demostrativos del progreso de este país y aquellos que se relacionan con mi persona, ya que mi cordialoso deseo es que [illegible] los cuentos del público sea lo mas inteligente y completo posible.

Doy á Ud. las gracias mas cumplidas por la consideración que [illegible] mi cabeza tan amplia y quedo de Ud. atto y seguro servidor



sation went on with ease. He took the trouble to speak slowly and distinctly, as he invariably does with foreigners, and his wife knows English so perfectly that she could transfer his thoughts with great rapidity. There we sat, we three, he a great ruler, the maker of a nation, just a fine, strong, handsome man, short of stature, broad of build, with his warm, clear, healthy skin, his short-cut white hair, and deep, dark, penetrating eyes. Just a simple, honest, kindly, homely man in a black cut-away coat, a pair of grey trousers, and white silk tie.

He spoke with great emphasis and force, but unlike most Spaniards he sat quite tranquil, rarely moved his hands to gesticulate, and never shrugged his shoulders. A man of iron will, determined grit and complete master of himself.

A gentleman in every sense. Although raised from the people, Diaz has the manner of a Prince. A calm, quiet dignity, a force, and withal a manner that inspires love as well as respect.

Just three years and a half had elapsed between my saying "Good-bye" to Mexico and my stepping from the train at Mexico City again, November, 1904.

Three years and a half is not long in the making of a nation, yet during those one thousand two hundred and seventy-seven days marvellous reformations had been accomplished by that wonderful man who steers the helm of Mexican affairs.

That President Diaz was the greatest man of the nineteenth century is a strong assertion, but those who read these pages will, I hope, think so too.

For any mistake in the volume I alone am to blame. Although General Diaz honoured me by handing over long extracts from his diaries, and told me many personal stories of his life; although I was present with him at many public functions and private parties; although he gave me a mass of figures and facts about Mexico to write from, in addition to which I know the country from end to end, these pages have been compiled in London, seven thousand miles away from the President of Mexico, and errors may have slipped in which he would have corrected had there been time and opportunity. From his

charming letter my critics will see he reposed considerable confidence in me, and I only hope the result may not be unworthy of his kindness.

He hopes to visit the United States and Europe shortly, when readers will be able to judge for themselves whether my description of the man tallies with their own impressions. Whenever he comes, or wherever he goes, General Porfirio Diaz and his talented wife are sure of a warm welcome.

E. A. T.

London, Christmas, 1905.

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PORFIRIO DIAZ,

SEVEN TIMES PRESIDENT OF MEXICO.

CHAPTER I.

BEGINNING OF A GREAT CAREER.

One of the most remarkable traits in the character of Porfirio Diaz, President of Mexico, is his modesty, and yet he is the greatest figure in modern history.

Egotism is the prevailing sin of success. This is not so in his case, for he does not appear to think he has accomplished anything. His aims are so high; he feels that he has never reached his goal.

Porfirio Diaz was born September 15th, 1830, so that when I first saw him in his own capital in 1900, he was seventy, but he appeared years less, and on my return to Mexico in the winter of 1904, I found him looking even younger. He is a marvellously juvenile veteran, all the more surprising in a land where youth is short, old age is long.

His position is absolutely unique in the world's history, for although President of a Republic, he has *reigned* for a quarter of a century. His will is all powerful, as great, in fact, as that of the Tsar and Pope combined. He is a monarchical, yet a democratic, ruler. He controls millions of people with a hand of iron; still they love him. Some say he is a despot, but his is a despotism tempered with justice, and at the same time he leads the unassuming life of a private gentleman. He walks or rides unattended in the quieter parts of Mexico City, where only a few years ago no ordinary individual dared go alone, and few

went about unarmed. He strolls alone in the neighbourhood of his summer castle at Chapultepec, cares nothing for pomp in his daily life, and plays to perfection the *rôle* of a simple, home-loving citizen. He is not a rich man ; his yearly income from the State is only $50,000 (about £5,000 sterling), or half that of the Lord Mayor of London. Want of means is sometimes inconvenient in life, but it does not engender such hatred as wealth. His only extravagance is in the cause of charity.

It is because Diaz has risen from the bottom rung of the ladder to the very top, and against such odds, that he stands forth as the greatest man of the nineteenth century. Of course, there were other great men in the nineteenth century—men such as Bismarck, or, of humbler origin, Garibaldi or Abraham Lincoln. Wonderful as were their achievements, none of them retained the head of affairs of State for well nigh thirty years. They did not drag their land from oblivion, its resources from bankruptcy, teach outlaws peace—in fact, make a nation and a prosperous country out of chaos, alone and unaided, in a quarter of a century, as Diaz has done.

His life has been a long romance ; an early struggle for existence, war and strife, wounds so severe that several times death seemed imminent ; imprisonment, dangerous escapes, military success, and then what has become a perpetual Presidentship—all these events have followed in quick succession in the career of this extraordinary personality.

On his father's side he comes of a good family, but being a Republican he thinks little of that, and is almost more proud of his grandmother, an Indian woman of the Mixteco tribe, one of the finest aboriginal races of Mexico.

Diaz' father, José Faustino Diaz, kept a little inn at Oaxaca (pronounced O–ah–uack–ah), the capital of the State of that name in Southern Mexico, and here the President and six other children were born. His native town became in after life the scene of some of the most important of his military exploits. Three years after the birth of Porfirio his father died of cholera, and the mother was left with her young family and limited means to battle with the world. The daily struggle to provide

Photo by RAVELL.]

Driving home.—An ox-cart in Oaxaca.

[*Page* 2.

Exterior of the house where General Diaz was born, Oaxaca.

[*Page* 3.

food and clothing for her children was great, but, being a brave, clever woman, she succeeded.

The house where Diaz was born has long since been swept away. It has, however, been replaced by one after his own heart, viz., a school known as the "Escuela Porfirio Diaz." This home of learning was built with Government funds, and is maintained by the same resources as a compliment to the President, who in his advanced years so much regrets the want of better education in his youth that he is unceasing in his endeavours to teach the populace.

There are still one or two people in Oaxaca who remember Diaz as a boy, and how he loved playing at soldiers. His home was near the convent of La Soledad, so named after the patron saint of the town, on whose feast day it has long been a custom to allow people to fire pistols or other firearms by way of expressing joy.

For weeks before the fête of La Soledad the boy saved his centavos, and going on to the roof of their family homestead he fired off his pistols and watched the smoke rise into the stillness of the night. Roofs in these semi-tropical regions are generally flat, and little parties are entertained on the house-tops, where the family often sleep in the hot weather.

The fête of La Soledad is remembered even to-day by Diaz as one of his great annual treats.

Until he was seven years old, Porfirio, a mischievous boy, went to the village primary school. At fourteen he joined the free school of the Roman Catholic Seminary, with the intention of entering the Church later on, this being his mother's dearest wish. The Bishop of Oaxaca—who was his godfather and a relative of his mother—was also strongly imbued with this idea. Education was even at that time free, a custom so universal in Mexico to-day that the military student obtains his training in the schools without fees. The cadets, however, are afterwards obliged to serve four years, and if a youth does not care to work out his time, then he must pay for the education he has already received. Schooling, although free, was not compulsory in those early days of the President's youth.

" And so," said General Diaz, with that merry twinkle he often gets in his eyes, " I am afraid I often missed school and played truant in the fields instead. I had several little friends, and our greatest joy was to get on to the top of one of the ore carts returning from the mines, and have a ride. Bullocks dragged the same lumbering old carts then as now, with the same solid wheels, made from the whole transverse section of a tree, but we boys thought ourselves kings, and the carts the finest coaches in the world, while the oxen stirred up the dust as they slowly trudged to the market-place."

Or they loved to follow the turkey vendor, who even to-day walks through the towns with his little flock, calling out : " *Vendedor de guajolotes ?* " (Who'll buy my turkeys ?), as the muffin man cries his wares in London, or the fish-wife in Edinburgh.

Turkeys are indigenous to Mexico, and the national " party-dish " is *mole de guajalote*, or turkey stewed with peppers and many spices, but that was a luxury unknown to young Porfirio in these childhood days. It is a pretty sight to see the turkey herd with his flock, and the housewives coming out to choose their bird and carry it off kicking and screeching to fatten in a pen till wanted. Diaz and his companions had fine fun catching the turkeys and carrying home the housewives' purchases.

As Porfirio grew older, being of an independent spirit, he earned a small sum by teaching, with a portion of which money he was able to pay for preliminary studies in Latin grammar, logic and philosophy (subjects necessary for all professional careers), and to help his mother with the little surplus. That " the boy is father of the man " was, indeed, proved in his early career. Young Diaz from the first showed his ability of imparting and gaining knowledge at the same time, which power has stood him in good stead through life.

The President speaks charmingly of his mother.

" We were very poor after my father died. She was still a young woman, and she had seven children, so her hands were full. I am afraid my brother Félix and I were naughty, mischievous boys. We used to climb trees or scramble through the prickly pear hedges and tear our clothes to ribbons—in fact,

An ore cart, Oaxaca, showing solid wheels.

The turkey vendor.

Prickly pear (Tuna).

Organ cactus.

[*Page* 5.

there was no form of villainy we boys did not enjoy ; but my mother was always kind, always hard-working, doing her best to keep us clean and tidy and well-behaved. Poor mother ! "

In that quaint little township of Oaxaca we can imagine those seven children running wild. The climate is almost tropical. Cactus hedges and aloes, to say nothing of three-inch thorns, are merciless with children's clothes, especially in a land where life is spent almost entirely out of doors. That good mother must have been continually mending and darning to keep all her unruly offspring tidy.

They were up at the break of day, and before going off to school had breakfast of coffee and tortillas. Tortillas are the staple food of the country ; they are pancakes made from maize, which is indigenous to Mexico.

" My mother," said Diaz, " was a very devout Catholic, and the Bishop of Oaxaca was not only her relative but her *compadre*, being my godfather."

Now a *compadre* is a very serious relationship in Mexico ; it stands next to a parent, and before brothers, sisters, or other relatives. Therefore the Bishop felt keenly his responsibilities towards young Porfirio. A godfather is styled *padrino*, a godmother *madrina*, and they are *compadres* to the child's parents. These *compadres* become spiritually related to the parents, wedded, so to speak, by the bonds of the Church. God-parents look upon their office as a sacred one ; they take the spiritual life of the child in their hands, and if the parents die, often fill their place towards the god-child.

Up to the time of Cortéz (1519) it was quite common for parents to sacrifice their newly-born babes ; but these days have long gone by, and it is the duty of *compadres* to look after the children if the parents in any way fail ; so *compadres* play an important part in the life of every home, and the welfare of every child.

" As my father was dead," continued General Diaz, " the Bishop naturally felt he must take particular interest in my welfare. He and my mother, as *compadres*, put their wise heads together and decided that the most profitable thing to do

was to put me into the Church. One fine day I was told of this decision. I said nothing ; they talked ; still I said nothing ; still they argued ; until finally I screwed up courage to utter one word.

" ' Impossible ! '

" The Bishop was angry. A terrible scene ensued. The poor old man waxed warm, told me I was a fool ; that the Church was the profession of a gentleman, and a sure means of board and lodging ; assured me that if I did not follow his advice I might not have enough centavos to buy tortillas, and would end in a pauper's grave.

" My mother was sad. Tears rolled from her eyes when I stoutly maintained that it was an impossible career for me ; so upset was she, indeed, that I weakly suggested I would think it over if they gave me time. She rose and took me in her arms, and that mother's kiss made me feel a grievous deceiver. For months and months she used to argue with me on the spiritual advantages of the Church. But it was of no avail. I never had the slightest inclination that way, and to show how opposed I was, I took with renewed vigour to teaching as a means of educating myself, and to help my mother. Time wore on ; again and again the Church was referred to, and even to-day I can vividly remember what a brute I felt to go against those dear old people, and how I argued with myself that my life would be longer than theirs, so I must carve it out my own way."

Then for many months the boy followed his own bent, and forgot all about the Church in his interest in his work, and in listening to stories of revolution and war which reached Oaxaca from time to time.

The priests would not, however, let him alone. They felt that in Porfirio Diaz they had to do with no ordinary lad, and realised that his talent and forceful character might prove of service to the Church. Their influence in Mexico, which up to then had been practically unbounded, was becoming a little less secure. It was necessary for the welfare of the Catholic faith to enrol in its defence young men who gave promise of future strength and power. They offered him a scholarship

when he was nineteen years of age, on condition that he would take minor Orders. He thanked them, but refused.

All idea of entering the Church was over; he would never again listen even to his mother's entreaties or to his *padrino's* (the Bishop's) prayers. Long hours were spent by his elders in striving to show him the many reasons why he should become a priest, but he was deaf to all entreaties. Circumstances and learning had only strengthened his determination not to take Holy Orders. All his inclinations tended towards being a soldier and fighting for his country, which at that time was torn by revolution and internal struggles.

Of course, troops were continually passing through Oaxaca, and the young student used to slip off in the evening to join them round the camp fires, where he would follow open-mouthed the tales of valour and strife that made the blood tingle in his veins, and first inspired him with a desire to follow a military career.

As he listened to those stories and heard how the colonel urged on his men, how the colonel planned and schemed and finally attained his end; how, in fact, the colonel of the regiment was everybody and everything, he wove dreams in the night and in imagination saw himself some day as colonel. Ah, but could he, the poor simple boy, ever rise step by step in the army and some day lead his regiment, some day help in the making of Mexican history, some day be of use to the land of his birth, the land he loved with all the ardour of youth, as he now loves it with the strength of maturity?

To be a colonel was in those days the highest ambition he ever wished to attain. Such a position seemed far beyond the realms of possibility. The profession of the law, not arms, however, was that in which he was destined to spend his youthful years. There were no newspapers at that time, but the stories retailed by the soldiers inspired him with longing for a more romantic career than ever the law could afford him.

Under those glorious Mexican skies, when the moon was straight above his head, and he made a shadow no bigger than the breadth of his own shoulders, the boy listened. His heart beat

the faster as he heard yarns of plunder and pillage, of murder and strife, and the flickering flames from the little camp fires made of kindling wood and charcoal, burning in an Indian pot, played on his features, which were illumined by the enthusiasm of youth as much as, or more than, by the tiny blaze. The cayotes (prairie wolves) howled in the hills, the grasshoppers kept up their incessant chatter; weird little beetles that beat a small drum under their chests added to nature's noises; flocks of parrots were common; blue, red and green macaws flew overhead; humming-birds, beautiful but songless, darted ceaselessly about. The stars trembled high in the heavens in that blue-black tropical sky, as the boy dreamed of Mexico's future, and longed to join in the fray for independence. Life would be deadly were it not for its illusions.

All boys love stories of adventure, but few live in the midst of the very scenes that make history or lay the foundations of romance. Those were stirring days in Mexico. No soldier knew if he would live to see the morrow, and existence was literally a hand-to-mouth affair. Hardships from heat and cold, exhaustion from long, fatiguing marches, and want of food and water were all endured in turn. It was a thrilling and exciting life, and young Porfirio loved every hour he passed round the camp fires.

His youth was spent in hard work; but in hours stolen from his desk he used to attend the cock-fights, especially on Sundays. There was no bull ring in Oaxaca, so these were the chief amusement of the people after Mass. Even to-day they are very general. Sometimes they are held in cock-pits, when the performance is watched by a paying crowd, and blade-like spurs are put upon the cocks' feet. Then the birds are really valuable, and in their way are tended as carefully as racehorses, but more commonly cock-fights among the Indians are made up at any street corner, and the stake is merely a few centavos.

Diaz, when still very young, was doomed to lead the drab life of a lawyer, and therefore had to put all dreams of a soldier's career aside. To a lad of his roving disposition the sacrifice must have been a great one; its full extent none but himself

could know; but his first duty was to earn money to assist his widowed mother and her family, and the determination which kept him for some years wedded to his original plans showed the earliest development of that strong character which has become so pronounced in after life. Adversity is the touch-stone of character. It is not in wealth, but in poverty, that hidden powers bear fruit.

Although his life is a long story of romance and adventure, and serious difficulties ably overcome, before describing his career in more minute detail it may be well to give a short personal sketch of the President of Mexico as he is to-day. General Diaz is not only possessed of strong character and iron will, but has shown his power as one of the greatest rulers in history. In that capacity he assumes a giant's strength, and yet retains the love and veneration of his people. Indeed, one of the most eminent men in Mexico writes, in a letter lately received:

"I am sure that as long as General Diaz lives the people of Mexico will never have anyone else as their President. Every day we love him more and more; and, thanks be to God, he keeps in such good health that he looks younger and younger."

It has been my privilege to meet many interesting personalities within the last few years, but no one has impressed me more forcibly as a man of grit and power than General Diaz, whose guest for some time on two occasions I had the honour to be. The more I saw of him during the many months I spent in his country, the more I admired him; the more I heard of him the more I realised what a wonderful man he is.

To sum up his career in a few chapters is difficult—as difficult as it is to find a precedent for his position—for although Mexico is a Republic and General Diaz merely a President, he has governed for over a quarter of a century. His lightest word is a command.

In December, 1904, he commenced his seventh term of office.

As I said before, he is a monarchical, yet a democratic, ruler. Those millions of people over whom he "reigns" are at peace with themselves, and at peace with the world; and yet when he ascended his "throne" they were neither. There had been

fifty-two dictators, presidents, and rulers in fifty-nine years. Revolution filled the air; civil war was rife; Maximilian struggling for Imperial power, a foreigner in a strange land; Juárez, overthrowing the all-powerful Catholic Church, confiscating the wealth of the priests and demolishing their religious houses; while Santa Anna was still a name to be dealt with—in the midst of all this turmoil and excitement young Diaz was fighting for his country.

Where so many had failed he succeeded. It was in November, 1876, that General Diaz was first elected President of Mexico, an office which he will never be allowed to vacate until death takes him from the scene of his labours. He was once out of power for four years, it being only possible at that time to hold the post of President for such a term; but a *compadre* of his own took his place for the time being.

After he entered the army, where he rose steadily and surely, he many times nearly lost his life; he went through adventures such as few men have experienced, for bloodshed of the most cruel kind was then by no means uncommon in Mexico. He rose to the rank of General, and at the age of forty-six became President of his country. Diaz realised that Mexico wanted a strong man in her ruler. He knew revolution must be peremptorily stamped out if the land were ever to be peaceful and prosperous. He has succeeded so marvellously that he can hardly realise his own success.

Although General Diaz holds such a remarkable position, he remains a simple, kindly man. He rises early, like most people in hot climates, only taking a cup of coffee for his breakfast, and gets through a vast amount of work, both at home and at the Palace, before the midday meal, which is a great institution in Mexico.

Nearly every one takes a siesta in the afternoon. Not so the President. Although he does no official work, so as to give his secretaries and Ministers a rest, he employs those hours when the sun is hottest in more personal matters.

All the latest telegrams received by the English-American newspaper are translated into Spanish for the President daily—

nay, hourly. Nothing passes in this great world that he does not know about. He is a modern of the moderns ; and as soon as he hears of a new invention, manufacture, or scientific discovery, he at once sends able representatives to inquire into the matter, and report fully to him. That is why Mexico is so up-to-date. More than that, his position is so unique that whatever he decides is for the good of the country can practically be done at once. He is not hampered by endless snail-like Royal Commissions, but can carry a thing to completion while another nation is merely thinking about it.

Mexico is a country with vast mineral and agricultural possibilities. There are to-day many thousands of miles of railway traversing that immense land, which is two thousand miles in length, or about as long as from Iceland to Northern Africa. Ports and harbours are being opened, and the home of the ancient Aztecs still goes on advancing. All this success and prosperity is due to General Diaz.

In appearance he is a short man, though his height of five feet eight inches is tall for a Mexican ; he is solidly built, with soldierly bearing and courtly manners. He has deep-set, dark eyes, with heavy brows, white, closely-cut hair, a bushy white moustache, and bright complexion, for his skin is hardly even swarthy. He has a deep, melodious voice ; and, although somewhat silent by nature and serious by habit, he possesses a keen sense of humour, and thoroughly enjoys a joke. He is simple in his ways, and yet at times assumes a stately air, and expects great deference from his people on ceremonial occasions.

Most men of seventy-five show their age. They are deaf ; not he. They are a little blind ; not he, for rarely he puts on glasses even to read ; they stoop and get hollow between the shoulders ; not he, he is upright and square ; they are inclined to drag their feet and assume a shuffling gait ; not he, he will walk for miles and for hours after game without showing fatigue. Diaz is like an energetic, strong, vigorous man a quarter of a century younger than his years, and still governs Mexico with the strength and enthusiasm of a young man.

One of his first Ministers said to me : " He rules by love, not

fear. He has been severe, he has even been cruel and hard, but the people realise that occasion demanded it, and they love him for his strength as well as his gentleness. Mind, our Mexico is a huge country to govern ; there is only a small army, and the people are naturally unruly. So what he has attained is even more than the outside world is able to appreciate."

On my way home from Mexico for Christmas, 1904, one of the most important men in the Cabinet at Washington, the most important perhaps, startled me by asking :

" Is Mexico ready to become part of the United States ? "

" Mexico ! " I exclaimed.

" Yes, Mexico. Is Mexico ready to amalgamate with America yet ? "

" No, certainly not," I replied aghast. " Mexico is a totally different country, with a different people, a different language, different thoughts, aims, ideals. Mexico is full of history and romance while you are new and business-like."

He smiled.

" We should make rather a good combination I think."

" I'm afraid not. Mexico and the States under one flag would amalgamate even worse than Finland and Russia."

Photo by RAVELL.]

The beast of burden.

[*Page* 12.

Photo by MRS. LUCIEN JEROME.]

Old Indian hag.

[*Page* 13.

CHAPTER II.

DEFIANCE OF SANTA ANNA.

Porfirio Diaz' birthday is an occasion well remembered throughout Mexico, for it falls on the eve of the anniversary of Mexican Independence. Only nine years before he first saw the light the Spanish rule had been thrown aside, so that his life practically covers the whole period during which the country has struggled out of prolonged disorder to the final attainment of assured peace.

Southern Mexico claims the honour of having produced the two makers of the modern State. Both Diaz and Benito Juárez were natives of the Oaxaca Valley, and were reared near the historic site where the ancient Maya-Zapotec tribes built those wonderful temples of Mitla, and where the greatest discoveries of all the hidden cities now promise to be made at Monte Alban.

In the Oaxaca Valley yet remain traces of a vast civilisation existing two, perhaps three, thousand years ago—and, wonderful to relate, the people of the district themselves still closely resemble the types found on the carved idols and pottery. Strangers remark the characteristic nose of the Jew, the thick lips and heavy eye-lids of the Egyptian, and on the pottery, even the wig-curl of the latter over the ear.

These ancient Zapotecs wore breastplates, ear-rings, necklaces and other ornaments of stone or gold, some of which are of fine workmanship. They were not a rude people; indeed, on looking at some of their mural paintings, the stone masonry of their walls, and many of their idols, one realises they were a

people of an advanced civilisation. Juárez was descended direct from these Zapotec-Indians, while Diaz has the blood of the Mixteco tribe in his veins.

Amid these ancient records of stone Juárez and Diaz played as children. So little were the ruins of Mitla appreciated or cared for during the last two or three centuries that the stones were taken out to build churches, or to repair the village dwellings. The whole valley is riddled with tombs, among which, from Mitla to Oaxaca, the President of Mexico built his boyish castles, and marched his imaginary soldiers represented by ancient arrow-heads, knives of obsidian or painted bits of pottery, while the old tombs served as fortresses in which to hide. Now he regrets the sacrilege and destruction he committed in those mischievous days, and is doing his best to preserve these relics of the ancient past from further harm.

In the brief period between the declaration of Mexican Independence. September 16, 1821, and the birth of a son, Porfirio, to José Faustino Diaz nine years later, Mexico had made no progress along the path of liberty. Indeed, the country had been the scene of continual conflict.

Leader after leader rose and fell. The people, divided into many factions, or parties, all inspired by different motives, fought desperately for their particular opinions, though ignorant of the first principles of political government. The most powerful of these parties was still, of course, the Spaniards, and equally of course, amongst them was to be found the immensely powerful body of the Priesthood, who, after the arrival of Cortéz early in the sixteenth century, had introduced the Roman Catholic religion among the native Aztecs of Mexico, then a Pagan people addicted to the most horrible rites.

Before going further with the life of Porfirio Diaz, however, it may be well to take a glance back—even if the succession of events is bewildering—at the extraordinary condition of the country and the growth of the nation over which, in after years, he found himself called upon to rule. At least a rapid survey may assist the reader to better appreciate the welter of turbulence, despotism, and revolution into which Porfirio Diaz as a

young man was thrown. His work has been to unravel the tangled skein.

A period of three centuries passed before Mexico threw off the Spanish yoke first imposed upon her by the conquests of Cortéz, and began an era of independence. They were for the most part centuries of the basest degradation for the native inhabitants of the country, and also gradually for the children and descendants of white settlers, Mexican born, who in time began to form the nucleus of a new nation ; for all, in short, save the immigrants who came direct from Spain to govern the land.

These last, grandees of diminished fortune, military adventurers, traders with the lust of gold whom the fabled wealth of the Indies had attracted, left the plains of Andalusia to accept a temporary exile in Mexico with two chief objects in view ; first, their own enrichment, and secondly, the increase of the gold and silver poured into the royal treasury in Madrid.

The Mexican Indians are still composed of one hundred and fifty different tribes, each speaking its own tongue, seventy-five of which have actually a written language, to say nothing of the numerous dialects. Among these tribes the most important are Aztecs, Mixtecs, Zapotecs, Otomi, Tlaxcalans and Juaves.

These were the conquered people, and the Spanish colonial system at no time troubled itself to recognise any rights on the part of those whom it held in subjection. To serve the all-powerful Catholic Church and enlarge its authority and world-wide dominion was a further end sought by the new rulers who settled in the country.

This is not a history of Mexico, and I shall not attempt so hopeless a task as to describe the Spanish ascendancy within the limitations of a few pages. But in those three hundred years Mexico as a nation was in the moulding. The influences then brought to bear explain much in Mexican character during the first half of the last century which might otherwise seem inexplicable ; its shiftiness, inconstancy, and cruelty, the anxiety to profit by any act of treachery which underlay the unquestioned courage of the people ; the ease with which their loyalty swung round from one cause to another ; and, more

than all, the incapacity for peaceful self-government which they displayed when the struggle for freedom against the Spanish oppressor was at length crowned with success.

In England we are accustomed to take pride in the results of our "little expeditions," but all our record of expansion contains nothing which will fairly compare with the achievements of Hernando Cortéz. With an army of five hundred and fifty-three foot soldiers, sixteen cavalrymen, one hundred sailors of his fleet, two hundred Cuban Indians, and a battery of ten small cannon and four falconets, he landed at Vera Cruz, on April 21, 1519, and accomplished the Spanish Conquest of Mexico and the subjection of its native races, probably numbering upwards of two millions. The horses of his soldiery especially struck the natives with terror, for they had never seen such a thing as a horse before, and took the steed and its rider to be one being.

Cortéz remained in the country as its first Governor, and was succeeded by other Royal Officers, Audencias, and Viceroys. Some few—but very few—have left names revered to this day. Others are commemorated in churches they erected which are still the glory of Mexico, and in the remains of great aqueducts and highways they inaugurated, relics of a time of past grandeur when the riches of the Mexican mines were carried by galleons of Spain on every sea.

The pomp of the Spanish Court established and maintained in Mexico through the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries was not, however, for the Mexicans. The Viceroys ruled wholly without responsibility to the people they were sent to govern. The Indians were enslaved. They had no rights in their own land. It was no man's duty to protect them; they had no claims to justice. Don Luis de Velasco, the second of the Viceroys, in 1554 earned for himself the honoured title of "The Emancipator," by freeing a hundred and fifty thousand Indians held as slaves by the Spaniards, but the change was more in name than in condition. When many years later there was a re-division of the Royal demesne, the Indians were handed over with the land.

We get a glimpse into their actual life in some of the decrees which were intended to ameliorate their unhappy lot ; in that, for instance, which attempted to secure for Indians employed in mines "regular hours of repose and some time to breathe the fresh air on the surface of the earth," and in the Royal ordinance which purported to abolish the system of assigning slaves to each colonist.*

The Spanish colonial empire might have played a yet larger part in the world's history but for the extraordinary fatuity with which the governing race clung to the doctrine that none but Spaniards fresh from the home country should take any part in colonial affairs. "To the victor belong the spoils," and that idea was carried to the utmost extremity. The end of colonisation, as then understood, was to divert the wealth of the conquered country to Spain. The Spanish monarchs may well have thought that purpose would be best accomplished by their own emissaries rather than by those, Spaniards though they might be by race and tradition, who had been born on Mexican soil, and might foster some affection for the land of their birth. The original settler retained his privileges, but his children and his children's children became outcasts.

They had no place in the army, which was filled exclusively by Spanish officers. They were debarred from holding office in the civil government. Socially they were despised by the haughty grandees from Castile and Seville whom they saw land from every ship that sailed into Vera Cruz—then the only port open—and who fattened upon the industries which the enterprise of the settlers had created. The Spaniard of Mexican birth, though of pure blood on both sides, was classed as a Creole, and no distinction was made between him and the product of the union of Spanish and Indian parents.

An utterance attributed to one of the latest Viceroys, that "So long as a single Castilian remained in the country, though he were no more than a cobbler, he ought to be its ruler," throws a flood of light on the contemptuous position to which the native-born colonists were relegated.

* Dr. Noll, "From Empire to Republic," p. 15.

Such a system of government as that established in Mexico necessarily led to the grossest abuses. Offices were created merely to find places for men who came from across the seas. New Spain, as Mexico was then called, became before its fall the most over-governed colony on the globe. "The worst features of the two worst governments in the world," says one writer, "the Gothic rule and that of the Spanish Moors, had been combined to form the government of Spain; and then the worst features of this mongrel government had been carefully preserved to oppress the native population of Mexico, in the code sent out to it by the Supreme Council of the Indies."

With the conquering race came a number of Dominican, Franciscan, and Carmelite Friars, who overran the country, parcelling out large areas of the territory as their possessions, and enforcing the Church's tithe. These Orders amassed enormous wealth and influence, and in later years became the most potent factors in fomenting and lending support to the revolutions which for so long distracted the country. The people were controlled by fear and impoverished by threats. Practically all that now remains of the religious Orders are the hundreds of deserted monasteries. They are fine buildings with stone ceilings, walls, and floors, built in the sixteenth century with great skill and taste, and are now used as schools, hospitals, and for other public purposes, such as railway-stations.

The Indian race has produced some fine men. Mejía, perhaps the best of the Emperor Maximilian's fighting generals, was an Aztec of pure descent. That Juárez was a Zapotec-Indian has before been mentioned. Few people realise that there are over half a million of Aztecs left in Mexico at the dawn of the twentieth century. They were conquered by Cortéz, but not exterminated. But the Indian, as he was in those days, untaught, uncared for, without a leader, and with no ideas of government, might have been held down for centuries longer.

The danger to the State, and the instrument of its final overthrow, was the Mexican colonist of Spanish blood, wedded to the land, whose numbers increased every year, and who saw the country of his birth exploited for the sole benefit of a foreigner

Type of Mexican.

[*Page* 18.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Guanajuato.

[*Page* 19.

whose arrogance filled him with intense hatred. The white Creole population of about a million at the close of the eighteenth century outnumbered the Europeans by twenty to one. Surrounding them were Indian tribes twice as numerous as themselves, and a horde of half-breeds.

A system of such exclusive centralism could only exist where the core was sound. When Napoleon I. sent Murat's armies marching into Spain, and Carlos IV. abdicated his throne, the whole of the Spanish-American Empire from Louisiana to Cape Horn was shaken to its foundations.

The first decisive blow for Mexico's freedom from the Spanish yoke was struck by the patriot priest, Miguel Hidalgo, in September, 1810. To this day the anniversary is commemorated by the President ringing the Bell of Independence from the balcony of the National Palace in the capital, a somewhat thrilling scene described in a later chapter.

Hidalgo, the first prominent figure in the history of modern Mexico, was a man of sixty when he started the revolt. Himself a Creole, he had been deeply moved by the oppressed condition of his race and of the Indians committed to his spiritual charge. From the pulpit of his church in the little town of Dolores, near Guanajuato, he proclaimed the revolution, and marching at the head of a small band of patriots, undisciplined and armed only with clubs and knives, soon gathered round him a large following. He met with astounding success. San Miguel, Celaya and Guanajuato—the most flourishing mining centre in Mexico to-day—fell successively into his hands.

Hidalgo marched to Mexico City, but when within five miles of the capital withdrew his army into the hills, fearing a repetition of the fearful scenes which had attended the capture of Guanajuato, when his half-savage Indians, burning with revenge for their wrongs, threw off all restraint, and for three days gave the town over to indiscriminate carnage, which the priestly leader was powerless to subdue.

This withdrawal was fatal to his cause. His adherents fell away. The fulminations of the Church cowed the weaker among them. His army was overpowered, and Hidalgo, made a prisoner,

was taken to Chihuahua in the north and promptly shot, together with three of his fellow instigators of the revolt.

But he had struck the note of Independence.

For eleven years, until freedom actually dawned for Mexico, the four heads of these martyrs, stuck on pikes, were exposed above the walls of the fortress of that quaint, picturesque old town of Guanajuato, as a warning to all who dared defy the might of Spain.

The Spaniards indulged in most cruel reprisals. General Calleja del Rey, on retaking Guanajuato from the Independents, drove the whole population—men, women, and children—into the great plaza. All were indiscriminately butchered, and the dead piled in heaps. In reporting his handiwork, this blood-thirsty general actually took credit to himself that by cutting their throats he had saved the Vice-regal government the cost of powder and ball. Afterwards he himself became Viceroy.

Spain, warned by the uprising, offered in the following year some sort of Constitution. It was too late; concessions or reprisals were equally ineffective to stay the patriots. Morelos continued the revolt which Hidalgo had begun, and when he, too, fell there were others to take up his cause, which, though kept in subjection, was never entirely crushed. Mina, Bravo, Guerrero kept alive the germ of liberty. The country was stained with blood until Yturbide's "Army of the Three Guarantees"—which gave to Mexico her present national banner of green, white and red—finally triumphed, and in September, 1821, Mexico won her Independence.

There seemed at last a prospect of peaceful and better conditions under the Empire, which was the first form adopted by Mexico in her attempts to achieve self-government. The "Three Guarantees" were:—

Religion—the Roman Catholic Church to the exclusion of all others;

Independence;

Union—equality of Mexicans and Spaniards.

Yturbide was elected Emperor of Mexico. Though a man of many accomplishments he had, unfortunately, not the gift of

kingship, and before many months were over his Empire consisted only of the capital.* The country adhered to the revolt led by General Santa Anna for the founding of a Republic—a man who for sixty years was intimately connected with its history. Yturbide was banished, and returning to Mexico two years later was shot by order of the Republican Government: and on October 11, 1824, General Guadalupe Victoria took the oath as first President of Mexico.

It is not often realised that only a century ago Mexico, territorially speaking, was one of the largest States of the world. Its boundaries extended over what is now the United States of America as far as the Red and Arkansas Rivers to the Pacific Coast, and northwards, to the British possessions. A party of explorers sent out by one of the early Viceroys even penetrated to Alaska, though, of course, Spain's effective dominion never extended so far. Guatemala and all that is now the Republic of Mexico came also under the rule of the Viceroys.

For its contraction from a State of such enormous area and huge potentialities to the limits of its present frontiers—Mexico is still a huge State—two causes are accountable, the collapse of the power of Spain under pressure from Napoleon I., and the civil turmoil and strife which waged before the Republic at length found the secret of settled government.

Louisiana, a province nearly a million square miles in extent, was lost in 1801 to Mexico, by the weakness of Carlos IV. of Spain, who abandoned it to France. Napoleon, without occupying the territory, sold it to the new Republic of the United States for fifteen million dollars in cash. Florida, another sixty-thousand square miles, was taken from the Spanish Mexican Empire and bartered to the same purchasers by Fernando VII. in 1819.

Guatemala, nestling in a corner of the south, took Mexico's own cue when Yturbide, in 1821, founded his short-lived Empire, and proclaimed independence. This last was a matter of trifling

* The practice of giving a state and its chief city the same name –as Mexico, Puebla, Oaxaca—is apt to cause confusion. I have, therefore, used the appellation "Mexico City" for the capital, although in official letters and documents it appears simply as "Mexico."

importance compared with the subsequent loss of Texas and New Mexico, which deeply stirred the land of Montezuma at a time when young Porfirio Diaz was obtaining his first impressions of public affairs.

The early promise of the Republic was not fulfilled. General Guadalupe Victoria, the first President, performed with success the difficult task of keeping the turbulent political factions at peace, and the country prospered ; but the election of his successor, Guerrero, was signalised by much bloodshed. A couple of years later Guerrero—betrayed into the hands of General Anastasio Bustamente, his own Vice-President, who had secretly plotted against him and seized power—was executed at Oaxaca.

Already, with the violent deaths of an Emperor (Yturbide) and a President, and with three revolutions to its account, the seven-year-old Republic had made but slow progress towards the ideal of liberty. In a few years' time, while General Santa Anna was climbing to power, Republicanism gave way to avowed despotism, and the last condition of Mexico was little, if any, better than when under the autocratic rule of the Spanish Viceroys.

Antonio López de Santa Anna was one of Mexico's most remarkable men. He was all-powerful at the time that Diaz first entered politics as a rebel against his authority. Imperialist, Republican, Autocrat, Dictator—everything in turn—he was at one moment the idol of the people, at the next the object of their most intense hatred, a refugee with a price upon his head. He violated every oath that he took, and was disloyal to every government which employed him.

Santa Anna was one of those men who " arrive " when young. A Mexican of Spanish descent, he fought against the Spanish Empire to put Yturbide on the throne. Yturbide had occupied that dizzy eminence but a little time when Santa Anna changed his tactics and became a leader of the movement to overthrow him and establish the Republic. The latter had been in existence but a few years when President Guadalupe Victoria had excellent reasons to denounce him as a traitor.

But such was the fickleness of Mexican character and the extraordinary personal magnetism of the man that in a few

days Santa Anna made himself the leader of the very army sent to arrest him, and was able to place his own nominee, Guerrero, in the President's chair.

Santa Anna was a political gambler pure and simple. The interest of his country were the stakes on the table. He played the game for the excitement it brought him, and the unlimited power which his usurpations placed in his hands. It suited his part to pose as the most ardent of Mexican patriots, sacrificing everything—but the goods were other people's—for the welfare of his native land.

A clever man, entirely unscrupulous, rapacious, cruel, of overmastering conceit, he dazzled the eyes of the Mexicans with his theatrical vain-boastings. He proved himself a soldier of courage. None knew better than he that the adhesion of the army was the first essential to any man who attempted to rule Mexico, and his popularity with the troops was at times phenomenal.

Part of his system while preparing the way for his Dictatorship was to place some other man in office, while he, the unrewarded patriot, retired from the scene—to pull the strings. Very soon his puppet-president was in difficulties, and Santa Anna came forward—the saviour of his country—to relieve the situation and receive universal homage.

It was his good fortune when his credit was at its lowest to lose a leg in fighting a French landing-party at Vera Cruz. This sacrifice by the hero in his country's cause was made the most of. He had the dismembered limb embalmed, and when at the height of his power directed its entombment in the capital with almost regal and ridiculous pomp. After his downfall the leg was torn from its resting-place by the infuriated mob, and dragged with every accompaniment of insult about the streets.

He had made overtures to give the Crown of Mexico to a European Prince in the early fifties. When Maximilian came he proffered his services—which the Austrian Archduke was wise enough to decline.

A schemer and a plotter to the last, one of his final exploits was to endeavour to foment a revolution in his own favour at

Vera Cruz when Maximilian's empire collapsed and the whole country returned to the Republican flag. A United States naval officer stifled his hopes by holding him prisoner on the gunboat *Tacony* and forbade his landing; an example of excellent tact entirely unjustified by any of the rules supplied for a naval officer's guidance.

Santa Anna had imposed a military oligarchy on the country in 1836, concentrating all power in the central authority. The Federal Republic as created by its founders was destroyed. Revolt broke out all over the land, but one State alone was successful in wresting its independence from the tyranny. That was Texas. Its immense territories and outlying position, as well as the antecedents of its people, favoured the struggle.

For fifteen years American colonists had been settling there, and the constantly changing government of Mexico had proved a great obstacle to development.

Santa Anna was furious at this state of affairs, and went to Texas determined to suppress the rebellion. He was guilty of horrible atrocities. The treatment the people received at his hands inspired the Texans with the courage of despair. Under General Sam Houston they made a great effort, completely routed Santa Anna, and captured the whole Mexican army with both its leaders, at Jacinto River. The Independence of Texas was recognised in a Treaty, and Santa Anna, whose military prestige suffered a severe blow, was only permitted to return to Mexico by way of the United States.

Later, Texas declared itself a separate Republic, and received recognition as such from most of the European nations and the United States.

In 1844, Santa Anna, once more in power for a season, put forward a plan for its reconquest, but as the Mexican Congress would only vote him $4,000,000 instead of the ten millions which he demanded, he gave up the enterprise.

A year later Texas made a request to join the United States. This produced intense excitement in Mexico. Troops were marched up to the Rio Grande, but General Taylor moving at the head of the United States army gained decisive victories.

General Santa Anna, who, meantime, had been deposed from his dictatorship, placed on trial for treason, and banished for ten years, was recalled from exile to take command of the Mexican army. He reached Texas only to experience repeated defeat, and was compelled again to fly for his life. By the treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo, signed in 1848 by Herrara, who, in the kaleidoscopic changes of Mexican politics had become President for a second term, Texas was finally ceded to the United States. This was twelve years after the first revolt.

Thus Mexico lost one of her most important possessions, for though Texas, as seen from the train, looks but a dreary, sandy waste of prairie, it has in reality beautiful spots in the oasis, notably San Antonio. This ancient town, where some of the severest fighting took place, is still very Spanish, and the old mission churches of the early settlers are to be seen almost intact. Texas is important, if only for its size, and now that irrigation is being vigorously pursued, those dusty miles of dreary flatness are being brought under cultivation.

The famous Rio Grande makes a natural division between Texas and Mexico. In some parts it is a beautiful stream running between deep ravines well overhung with foliage. The chief points for crossing are El Paso in the west, on the Texan side, with Cuidad Juárez on the Mexican frontier; and in the east, Eagle Pass, with Cuidad Porfirio Diaz on the Mexican side. Thus it will be seen that two of the gates which give access to the land of Montezuma from the north bear the names of the two men who have made modern Mexico. Laredo, with Nueva Laredo on the Mexican side, is the crossing-place of the Mexican National Railway, and is now the shortest route from Mexico City to New York—a journey accelerated lately so as to be accomplished in a hundred hours.

Now to return to Porfirio Diaz himself, after what has been a somewhat long digression. As a lad of fifteen he was, as we know, a scholar at the Roman Catholic Seminary at Oaxaca. A year or two later he started with all the unconquerable

enthusiasm of youth on a momentous journey. Mexico City was his goal.

He was too poor to ride the two hundred and fifty miles, so he walked the greater part of the way. It is a beautiful road across the mountains and through deep ravines of the Cañon de Tomellin, where, although there is practically no vegetation in places, the volcanic masses display a variety of warm colours—red, yellow, brown, grey or white. Those volcanic upheavals are so twisted and twirled that they look as though they had been swirled round and round in a boiling cauldron. Even with them alone the cañon would be a magnificent piece of scenery.

Further on the country becomes more fertile, and the land affords good pasture for cattle ; all along the sides of the hills, right high up into the thickly-wooded mountains, are patches of brightest green. These are sugar-cane, which grows with great luxuriance in this damp, tropical region. Bananas cluster everywhere, and cocoa-nuts hang in bunches from the trees. Melon plants flourish on all sides ; indeed, the tangled jungle seems to contain almost every kind of tropical plant and shrub. Antelopes, flights of turkeys, monkeys chattering incessantly among the bamboos which abound, and often attaining a height of sixty feet, are common sights.

Prickly mimosa, bougainvillea, red pepper and castor-oil plants flourish everywhere. Endless creepers and mosses hang from the trees, while below lie thick patches of jungle. A wonderful and useful creeper is common, twining up the tree trunks. It is not pretty, being merely a green stalk the thickness of a man's thumb. Cut in two places about three feet apart with a machete (native sword worn by nearly every peasant), the purest of water immediately gurgles forth from the stem. It is prized in a land of stagnant streams because of its purity for drinking purposes and for boiling for tea or coffee. This creeper is, indeed, one of nature's greatest gifts. Maidenhair ferns grow in fissures of the rock, and wild orchids abound, giving a strong note of colour among the pervading green and brown.

Each turn brings one to more and more beautiful scenes,

Photo by Cox.]

A shrine, showing moss and creepers on the trees.

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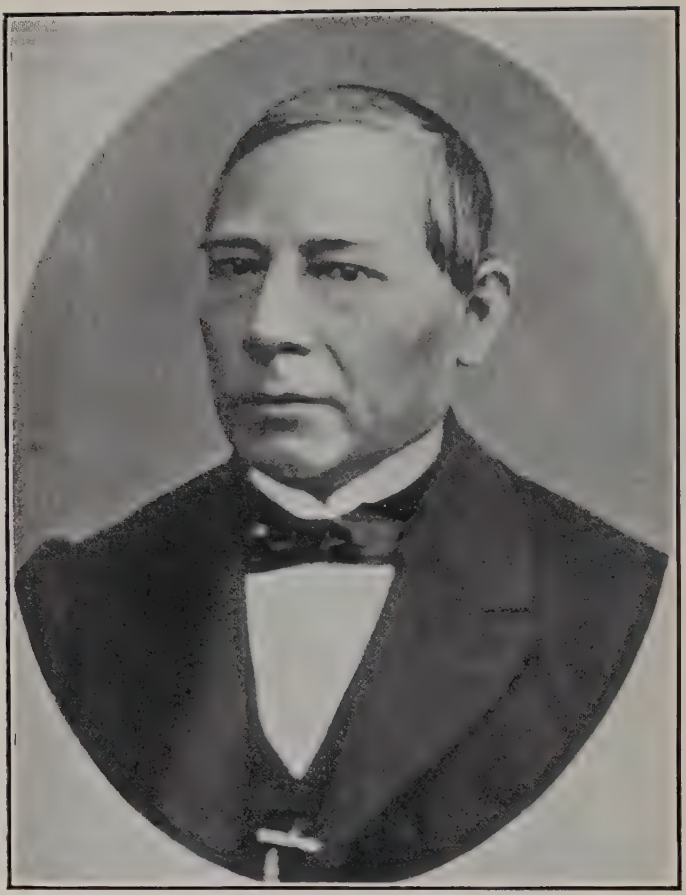

Benito Juárez.

each more lovely and more wonderful than the last; but still it must have been a tiring journey on foot for young Diaz, for the damp heat is trying, although it is this very heat which makes everything grow so luxuriantly.

The purpose of his long tramp was not altogether Quixotic. The lad had heard about the loss of Texas to his country, and that American troops were at that time invading its northern frontiers. Men were needed if they were to be driven out. So considering himself a man at seventeen he determined to reach the capital and offer his services to the National Guard. But before time, or occasion, served to afford him opportunity to receive his baptism of fire, the brief, inglorious struggle ended in the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo; and finally the National Guard itself was disbanded. Thus the chance of his entering the army was for the time defeated.

Back once more at Oaxaca, and having renounced irrevocably the ecclesiastical career which it had been the desire of his mother and his *padrino* to impose upon him, Diaz set himself more seriously to the study of the law, to which he applied himself for the next few years. It must be borne in mind that he had no money, and not only this, but his mother was more or less dependent upon him. Consequently it was necessary for him to earn an income at the same time as he continued his studies. Although still a youth, those were years of hard work, much privation, and considerable anxiety. He was enabled to pay his fees at the Law Institute by himself taking a few pupils. Good fortune brought him under notice of Don Marcos Pérez, a judge of the district and professor at the Law Institute, who took great interest in his promising student.

Pérez was the means of introducing Porfirio Diaz to Benîto Juárez, then Governor of the State of Oaxaca, to whose patronage he was indebted for a slender, but welcome, addition to his resources which came from his appointment as librarian at the college. Without Juárez and his overthrow of the Church, Diaz would never have succeeded in making Mexico what she is to-day, and no one is more ready to acknowledge that fact than the President himself.

Benito Juárez (pronounced Huarez) was a man and a judge when Diaz began life, there being a difference of twenty-six years in their ages. Diaz fought for Juárez' Laws of Reform against the Church, and also helped to make Juárez President of the Republic, when he was himself a captain in the army in 1856-7. These two men, although in later years political differences created a wide gulf between them, were for the greater part of their lives warm personal friends. Both were Presidents of Mexico, and to these two wonderful personalities Mexico owes her strength to-day.

As a bare-footed Indian lad, Juárez had originally been a servant in a monastery; but on finding that he possessed a brilliant intellect, the priests educated him to be a "pillar of the Church." He loved learning, studied theology, and read ecclesiastical history. A keen scholar and deep thinker, he worked on and on until, like Diaz some few years later, he realised that a dominant civil power, and not a clerical oligarchy, is necessary to govern a country successfully.

General Diaz speaks most charmingly of Juárez. He told me the following story, which I give as nearly as possible in his own words:

"Juárez, when nine years old, was left an orphan; he lived with an uncle of his, a full Indian like himself, in the poor little village of Guelatao, in the State of Oaxaca, about forty-five miles from where I myself was born. His uncle employed him in looking after his cattle, and frequently beat him, and treated him harshly in many ways. One day when in the fields with his oxen, he accepted the invitation of another shepherd boy that they should go down a ravine near by to roast some ears of green corn.

"This meant leaving their oxen, for the fire took some time to make, and the corn some time to roast, although, no doubt, it tasted excellent when done.

"The animals, finding themselves no longer watched, entered an adjacent corn-field and caused much destruction. This was discovered by the owner, who immediately appeared beside the

Country fruit pedlar.

[*Page* 28.

A shop door.

[*Page* 29.

frightened lads, threatening Juárez that he would accuse him of neglect and theft before his uncle. The boy begged for mercy, for his uncle was cruel without cause, and he dared not face him under such circumstances. He was so frightened that he never returned home, but took himself off, bare-footed as he was, to the city of Oaxaca, joining some vendors of provisions who were going to the market, with whom he walked all the distance, about fifteen leagues, in two days. He remained with them during the market day, intensely interested in all he saw, earning a few *centavos* by carrying market produce, with which he obtained food. Although his newly-found acquaintances wanted to take him back he refused, and remained alone, with no money and no friends, in a strange town—not even able to speak Spanish, for he only knew a dialect of his Zapotec tongue.

"He wandered around the market, but luck had left him with his fellow-villagers' departure, and no one would employ him. At last, crying and lamenting to himself in his Indian language, he was noticed by a student, also of Zapotec origin, who could understand him. Juárez told him his story, and finding the stranger sympathetic, asked if he could work for him as a domestic servant, not for wages but for food, to learn Spanish and the Christian Catechism—all he then thought necessary for his education.

"The student took him to the house of a man who kept a shop. This individual had a son, and engaged Juárez to perform menial work and accompany his little boy to school. Juárez' intelligence and eagerness for instruction were soon observed, and finally the lad was sent to the same free school with the shopman's own son, and allowed so many hours' liberty a day from domestic duties for the purpose. Later on, as a reward for his good conduct, his master sent Juárez to College, intending him for a priest. The boy had different inclinations. No power or persuasion could make him take Holy Orders, and when his benefactor died he determined to follow the career of a lawyer."

In time he became a judge; more than once he was Governor of the State of Oaxaca, then Minister of Justice, and was several

times President of Mexico, and the principal mover in what Mexicans call the Laws of Reform.

These Laws of Reform briefly meant:

1.—Equality of all men before the law, and the abolition of the privileged courts for priests and military men.

2.—Sequestration of the property of the Church, the dissolution of the Religious Orders, and eventually civil marriage, civil registration of births, deaths, etc.

3.—Religious toleration, with certain privileges for Catholic worship, and full separation of Church and State.

So complete has this latter severance become that the President of Mexico to-day never enters a church except to attend a friend's funeral service.

All this was the outcome of a bloody war lasting three years. It commenced with an attempt at partial reform, which the clergy, in combination with the more conservative elements in the army, resisted. The above facts are worth keeping in mind in view of subsequent events, and are given here as they were the culmination of the life work of Juárez.

Of his professors and fellow-students in those early days General Diaz has something to say in the diary in which he has jotted down some of the leading events of his life, one of the most remarkable lives ever recorded. No part of this diary has hitherto been published, but through his kindness and courtesy I am able to quote his own words somewhat fully in the following pages.

Writing of his teacher, for whom he had an inordinate love and risked his own life, a man who greatly influenced his early years, he says:

"Don Marcos Pérez was, like Juárez, an Indian of pure race, and both of them might have figured with advantage among Plutarch's characters.

"He was sent by his father to the town of Oaxaca to receive his education. A man of distinguished ability, of wide learning, and of strong character, honourable in all his dealings, he became the best lawyer in Oaxaca, and rose to be one of the most dis-

tinguished men in the State, discharging the duties of President of the Court of Justice.

"Perhaps more severe than Juárez, to whom he was related by blood, Pérez enjoyed the sincere and lasting friendship of that great Mexican statesman. The two had many ideas in common, and both were among the most firm and enlightened Liberals of the whole Republic.

"I had the good fortune to know Pérez intimately, to understand his character, to learn much from him, for I admired my teacher, and held him as a model worthy of imitation. He treated me as a child, but his friendship was a great advantage to me in improving my education and position when I was still a poor and unknown boy."

It was on the occasion of a prize distribution at the school that Diaz was first presented to Benito Juárez, when that illustrious patriot was Governor of the State of Oaxaca. The bearing and conversation of Juárez and other of the Liberal politicians with whom he came in contact, made a lasting impression upon him:

"I was delighted with the open and frank countenances of these two men, after the reserved and ceremonious bearing of the clergy, my first preceptors in the seminary. I heard at the prize distribution very Liberal speeches, delivered by the Licentiate Professors Don Manuel Iturribarriá and Don Barnadino Carvajal—discussions in which young men were treated as friends, and as men who possessed rights."

One can readily understand that this was a new experience for the earnest and impressionable young man.

In this critical period of his life Diaz was preparing himself physically and mentally for the strife and struggle of future years. In his diary he frequently speaks of his delight in athletics. While mainly engrossed in the law, his inclination towards a military life was so strong that he lost no opportunity of acquiring knowledge of war. He shared with his fellow-students of Oaxaca, so long as Juárez remained Governor of

the State, the privilege of attending the military schools, where he received his first instruction in arms.

Politics, too, were beginning to exert a sway over him.

"My intellect," he writes at this time, "first expanded under the heat of Liberal principles, and I developed and improved in philosophical studies."

Of Juárez in those days he saw a good deal.

"In the house of my master and patron Don Marcos Pérez, I often met Señor Don Benito Juárez, who was always very kind and friendly to me."

In 1854, an opportunity came to Diaz to repay with interest the many services he had received from his former teacher. Pérez was arrested by the followers of General Santa Anna, and accused of being a Liberal conspiring against the dictatorship. He was thrown into prison, and for greater security was confined in a turret of the Convent of Santo Domingo, in Oaxaca town, where he was rigorously guarded. Though the walls were high and the sentinels vigilant, Porfirio Diaz, aided by his brother, Félix Diaz, succeeded in the dead of night in effecting an entrance to the convent and communicating with the captive, and was thus instrumental in obtaining his liberty. The adventure was perilous, as may be judged from General Diaz' own simple words:

"The window was closed, and in the upper part of the solid shutters were two small openings, each with an iron cross in the centre. In the door of the turret was a small wicket, rather lower than the full height of a man, through which the sentinel, stooping down, could from time to time watch his captive. There was a second outer door, and in the passage between the two were the sentinel and a corporal. This second door was, like the first, closed and locked. The guard consisted of fifty men, under a captain and a superior officer. All were perfectly sure that the prisoner could not effect an escape, for his cell had only the one door and the windows.

"When I had been lowered by a rope to the window and the sentinel showed himself at the little wicket, I had to stoop down, sliding below the sill as far as possible so as not to be seen. Thus I hung, suspended by the rope which my brother Félix held from the top of the roof. In spite of many difficulties and dangers, we succeeded on three separate nights in speaking with Don Marcos Pérez."

It is not difficult to realise the scene. The walls of the court-yard were solid and high. There were no windows until the third floor, so that to gain access from below was impossible.

Porfirio and his brother Félix, nothing daunted, determined to communicate with Pérez at all costs, and, procuring a rope, these two adventurous young men succeeded in getting on the roof of some neighbouring houses, and, under cover of night, running along to the spot where they believed Pérez was concealed.

Then came the anxious moment. They dared not call out for an answer which would locate the teacher's whereabouts, and therefore Diaz had to risk being let down to the wrong window.

The rope was quickly tied round Porfirio's body, and Félix made it secure to his own person for safety. Then slowly and stealthily Porfirio slipped from the roof, and, clutching the large stones of the wall, slid down some fifteen feet until he was level with the window grating. To his joy it was the right one, and he saw the object of his search sitting in a corner of the cell, with a little oil lamp before him.

At any moment the sentry might have come to his spy-hole, not twenty feet from where the young man was dangling, but luckily for the fortunes of Mexico he did not do so, or a ball would have shortened the career of her future ruler.

The conversation between master and pupil ended, a low whistle informed Félix that his brother was ready. The ascent began, but Félix, who was tired with the strain, found dragging Porfirio up was more difficult than letting him down, so the moment was an anxious one for both.

The feat was accomplished, however. On three successive nights the perilous visit was made by the same means.

It was this revolt against the power of General Santa Anna, for which Pérez was made prisoner, that altered the whole course of the career of the present President of Mexico. Up to that time he had quietly pursued his profession as a lawyer. Though known for his Liberal sympathies he had not figured among the prominent political leaders, possibly on account of his youth, and because no opportunity had up to that time occurred.

It came with the national rising. His introduction to the strife was the occasion of a dramatic incident, which can luckily be given in his own words.

"The dictatorial, retrograde politics of General Santa Anna, and his persecution of the Liberals, occasioned a re-action in the country which culminated in the proclamation of the 'Plan of Ayutla,' in January, 1854. The Revolution was headed by General Don Juan Álvarez, a full-blooded Indian, who was one of the few leaders of the War of Independence still surviving. Soon after its inception Santa Anna, imitating the example of Louis Napoleon—whom he flattered himself he resembled in more ways than one—sought to obtain a demonstration in his favour, and ordered a popular vote to be taken which should decide who should exercise the supreme Dictatorship.

"I was filling the post of Professor of Law, when the Director of the Institute—then Dr. Don Juan Bolaños—called all the professors together on the 1st of December, 1854, to vote in a body for Santa Anna. I refused, thinking that during the voting there would be some scandalous incident which would justify recourse to arms, and hoping that I might perhaps find an opportunity to be of use. This, however, was impossible, since the Government had posted a strong guard of troops in the plaza, and had even brought up cannon. I went to the porch of the Palace where the votes were being taken.

"General Don Ignacio Martínez Pinillos, who was Governor and Military Commander of the State of Oaxaca—or Depart-

ment, as it was then called—was presiding at the poll within the Palace.

"The head of the division in which I lived, Don Serapio Maldonado, presented himself, saying that he voted on behalf of various individuals who were residents in his division for the continuance in power as Supreme Dictator of General Santa Anna. Then it was I appealed to the President myself to discount my vote from the number, because I did not wish to exercise the right of voting.

"At that moment the academical body of the Institute arrived, and all the professors voted in favour of Santa Anna, and gave their respective signatures to the roll.

"When this was done the Licentiate Don Francisco S. de Enciso, who was Professor of Civil Law, asked me if I was fully determined not to vote. I answered in the same terms in which I had excused myself to General Martínez Pinillos, saying that voting was a right which I was free to exercise or not.

"'Yes,' answered Enciso, 'and one does not vote when one is afraid!'

"This reproach burnt into me like fire, and made me seize the pen which was again proffered me. Pushing my way between the electors I passed up the room and recorded my vote, not for Santa Anna, but in favour of General Don Juan Álvarez, who figured as chief of the Revolutionary movement of Ayutla."

This unexpected incident aroused general consternation and uproar. In the excitement of the moment young Diaz passed out of the voting hall unobserved, and disappeared in the crowd in the plaza of Oaxaca. Orders were immediately issued for his pursuit and arrest. In the meantime he had grasped a rifle, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by another resolute companion, got away, riding down those who would have barred his passage. The two horsemen disappeared into the shadows by the Ejutla-road, on the way to Mixteca, where the peasants had already risen in arms against the Dictatorship of Santa Anna.

Diaz placed himself at their head. Rarely has a commander had less promising material with which to conduct his first

enterprise. His men were few in number, ill-armed, ill-prepared—poor labourers of the soil, entirely unskilled for the task before them.

"I ordered my men," explains General Diaz, "to lie concealed in the plantation of Teotongo, knowing that Lieutenant-Colonel Canalizo, of the 4th Cavalry, was following to attack us with a mixed column of eighty to one hundred horse and some fifty infantry.

"This was a very small force, but one half as strong would have served to cut us to pieces if it had not been that the country, with which I was familiar, favoured our manœuvres. Scarcely twenty or thirty of our men were armed with muskets; the rest had axes and implements of labour and agriculture.

"It seemed a natural supposition that at the spot where we awaited their coming—a gap in the plantation, with thick vegetation all round—the Republican soldiers should stay to drink from the running stream and rest their horses."

This was a peculiarly rugged ravine. Below ran a pretty bubbling stream through thick vegetation. Precipitous rocks rose on one side perpendicularly above the water, so high and so straight, that by climbing up the back of the range Diaz and his followers could look over the precipice on to the river below, along the bed of which he expected his enemies to pass.

"Many of the soldiers did stop, especially the infantry, but the cavalry rode on. We had loosened numbers of boulders on the hill above, and placed levers beneath to topple them over at a given moment when the soldiers should be drinking at the stream. We bided our time, and then suddenly an avalanche of large stones were let loose on the troops, causing many injuries among them."

One can picture the youth, the blood tingling in his veins, roused to indignation against Santa Anna's Dictatorship, smarting under what he considered an insult, the fire and enthusiasm of early years burning within him. One can fancy his excitement over that encounter, only a small affair it is true, but still it

proved the turning point in his career. The events leading to it had weaned him from the law as conscience had weaned him from the Church.

No man can be great without opportunity; but opportunity without the talent to seize it is like a watch without a mainspring.

Diaz was only twenty-four, just at the most impressionable age. He felt his country was being sacrificed to one unscrupulous man, that this was the moment to be up and doing. He had tasted the first fruit of independence. From that moment he felt spurred on to work for his country, to achieve something for Mexico, to lay down his life, if need be, for the cause. But all he records in five simple words is the fact:

"That was my first engagement."

CHAPTER III.

FIGHTING FOR THE JUÁRISTS.

A FIRST military engagement must be an exciting affair to any young soldier, more especially to one so keen, not only in his profession, but also in the cause for which he was fighting. Diaz was a soldier at heart and a Republican in feeling, so to win a fight, even a small one, for his side was intoxicating joy.

General Diaz, in the passages from his diary quoted in the last chapter, refers to the dictatorial, retrograde politics of Santa Anna. His words, however, give but a slight indication of a movement that had a most momentous influence upon Mexico. The "Plan of Ayutla" was one of those numerous uprisings that foretold the approach of the War of Reform, by which the powerful Church Party was overthrown—the greatest of Mexico's civil conflicts.

It did not actually break out until 1857, but quite ten years earlier one detects the commencement of the struggle in the national mind. Mexico, impoverished by her troubles with the United States, divided against herself, and devastated by the incessant fighting between political factions, was a country with no credit among nations, and torn by civil turmoil at home.

Banditti abounded; murder was an ordinary occurrence; property was never safe, and yet more often than not, offenders escaped unpunished because they were connected in some way with ecclesiastical bodies, and under the ægis of the Church the criminal stood beyond the reach of civil jurisdiction.

In this deplorable state of affairs, no man appeared who

Porfirio Diaz.

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Photo by RAVELL.]

A village church.

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was strong enough to grapple with the demoralisation of the nation, and the abuses and overbearing opposition of the Clericals to any movement towards national progress. Between the years 1848 and 1853, Herrera, Arista, Ceballos, and Lombardini had all filled the Presidential office, and the action of the last-named—as Acting-President—in inviting General Santa Anna to return from his exile to Mexico was stirring incentive to the Liberals for stronger measures and bolder action.

Santa Anna landed in Mexico, in April, 1853. Although he had never cleared himself of the charges made against him during his previous Presidency, and the Mexicans had menaced him with death for his perfidy, his corruption, and his attempts at despotism during his days of power, he now entered the country in triumph, and a fortnight later was declared President. If the people's feelings had changed, Santa Anna's character had not. He played again the part of a despot. The Constitutional Government of Mexico was overthrown by an absolutism that deprived the States of their rights. Liberals were cast into prison, and freedom was strangled. Every measure adopted by Santa Anna turned towards one end—his own self-aggrandisement. Finally, such was his overmastering vanity, he aimed at taking the crown of Mexico, and as a first step declared himself Perpetual Dictator.

But this act, accompanied as it was by deeds of gross corruption, was the signal for a revolution in Acapulco, which aimed at the overthrow of the Dictatorship, and the formation of a Constitutional Government that would study the rights of the governed. The " Plan " against Santa Anna's rule gained ground. Diaz, as we have just seen, was one of the first to vote and fight for the Revolution.

Santa Anna, beaten in battle, deserted by his followers, and realising the hopelessness of his position, finally fled from the country in August, 1855. Henceforward his intrigues against his native land were conducted from some safe place of exile.

Then followed three months of factional disputes and practical anarchy, but in November the revolutionary General Álvarez was

elected President, and he appointed Benito Juárez his Minister of Justice and of Ecclesiastical Relations. This step was a blow to the Centralists, Conservatives, and Clericals, to whom it intimated that his chief object would be Reform. The appointment of Juárez was quickly followed by the "Ley Juárez," which law subjected soldiers and the clergy to trial by civil courts. This brought a storm from the Clericals and their supporters, and opened the exhausting struggle with the Church from which the Republic came out victorious only after waging the longest and bloodiest civil war in Mexico's history.

Álvarez, a soldier rather than a politician, resigned the Presidency. Ignacio Comonfort thereupon formed a Provisional Government, and took up the Church's challenge. A revolt in Puebla supported by ecclesiastical revenues was stamped out, and the cost of its repression recovered by the seizure and sale of the properties of the Church. The "Ley Juárez," abolishing the ecclesiastical courts, was quickly followed by the "Ley Lerdo," which forbade Church corporations possessing land beyond what was necessary for "actual conduct of their business," and decreed the compulsory sale of any surplus.

Nor did reform halt here. A Liberal Constitution embodying the essential ideas of the "Plan of Ayutla" was laid before the Constitutional Congress which was summoned. Juárez was one of its secretaries. Certainly the new Constitution lacked nothing on the score of thoroughness. It was the direct issue over which the War of Reform was fought, and is the basis of the Constitution of Mexico to-day.

All ecclesiastical and military privileges were abolished. Instruction was to be brought within the reach of all. Freedom of speech and of the Press, the right of petition, association, and carrying of arms, were guaranteed—these were the main points of the new Constitution.

It was approved by the representatives of the people, sanctioned by Comonfort on February 5th, 1857, but its promulgation was deferred to September 16th, the anniversary of Mexican Independence.

Diaz, during the later stages of this political turmoil, was

acting as Civil Administrator of Ixtlán. He had been entrusted by Juárez with the reorganisation of the National Guard, which, as a youth, he had endeavoured to enter prior to its disbandment. This force became the principal, and indeed, almost the only armed body for the support of the Liberal party in the Mexican States. A shrewd observer of events, Diaz had no illusion that the new Constitution, announced to the country with so many fair promises, would restore peace and tranquillity; to the hitherto all-powerful Church it was, indeed, a direct challenge.

News that reached him of affairs in the State of Oaxaca, with which his early years had been so intimately associated, determined him to renounce altogether a civil life, to throw aside the practice of the law, and to accept that military career which, through years of penury, toil, and family cares, he had always hoped it might some day be his lot to attain.

On his solicitation Juárez obtained for him a commission as Captain in the 2nd battalion of the Grenadiers, which was at that time commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Don Manuel Velasco. Diaz thereupon returned to Oaxaca to assume his military duties.

His anticipations of the effect of the new Constitution on the country proved correct. It was resisted by the Clergy—allied with the Conservative party—by every means in their power, by protests, threats, and finally by excommunications; and once more Mexico was plunged into Civil War. Diaz soon saw more fighting.

"The Conservative party," he declares, "supported and directed by the Clergy, incited the Civil War—incited it by their resistance to the Law of Nationalisation of June 25th, 1856, and more especially to the Constitution of February 5th, 1857. The excitement soon spread to the State of Oaxaca, and in July of the same year, revolt broke out in the district of Jamiltepec. The movement was led by Colonel Don José María Salado. The Government of the State ordered a column of the National Guard to attack the revolutionists. In this

service the 2nd battalion of the Grenadiers, in which I was captain, participated."

Here is a vivid picture of the action fought at Ixcapa, a week or two later. It is Diaz' first serious engagement, and shows once more the daring of the young soldier, then but twenty-seven years of age, who under the most disheartening circumstances led his small force to victory in the face of what seemed almost certain disaster.

"The force sent out consisted of my company of Grenadiers, the 2nd company of the same battalion, commanded by Captain Pedro Vera, and a company of the National Guard of Ejutla, under the command of Lieutenant Don José María Ramírez. This officer rose to be Brigadier-General, and afterwards Governor of the State of Chiapas, with which the 2nd battalion was territorially linked. My company, complete and ready, numbered one hundred men, the 2nd company seventy. Weakest of all was the company of the National Guard, which was reduced to forty men.

"These forces were placed under the orders of Colonel Velasco.

"As further news of the spread of the revolt came to hand, its aspect appeared more grave. In consequence, the Governor decided to incorporate with our forces an additional company of the 2nd battalion of Grenadiers under Major Montiel, which would give us another hundred men. By putting ourselves into communication with Colonel Nicolás Bustos, we could depend upon a further couple of hundred National Guards from the State of Guerrero.

"As we were marching to join Colonel Bustos we were intercepted on the 13th of August, between Santa María Ixcapa and Cuajinicuilapan, in the Ometepec district, by Colonel José María Salado, with a strong column of seven hundred men, and were obliged to accept battle. Bustos was then ten or fifteen miles distant. Our scouts brought reports that the enemy was less than a mile away, lying in ambush on the road we had to follow.

"After our column—at this time numbering only three hundred and thirty men—had taken a short rest in the town of Ixcapa, Colonel Velasco went out with a few corporals and sergeants to reconnoitre from a neighbouring height, pointed out to him by the mayor of the town. While he was thus occupied Major Montiel put our men in fighting order. Velasco returned, and reported in the hearing of the whole force—somewhat imprudently, I thought—that the enemy was far superior to ourselves, and that we must retreat without fighting, because if we engaged them we should undoubtedly be defeated.

"As our scouts came in, a few shots fired after them showed that they had been discovered, and soon the revolutionists advanced in strength upon us. Colonel Velasco ordered a counter-march. I pointed out to him the futility of this movement, which I saw clearly would result in the destruction of our small force. Such discussion as there was the enemy cut short by appearing in mass on the road, while a detached body of them entered the town by a path hidden from our sight.

"In this unexpected crisis I addressed a few words of exhortation to my company, hoping to rouse their military ardour, which had been a trifle depressed by the opinion so imprudently delivered by our colonel. Without awaiting orders, I gave the command to fix bayonets and advance on the enemy. Lieutenant Ramírez did the same. The two leaders commanding the company of the National Guard remained with the nucleus of the force, watching what passed with us.

"Before we had gone far a column that had descended a hill and passed through one of the side streets of the town, appeared on the right a short distance off. The other column which had traversed the town, and to which I first alluded, was that commanded by Colonel Don Pedro Gazca. I was obliged, therefore, to first charge and, if possible, disperse this right column rather than that which had been the original object of my movement."

Diaz led his company on foot, sword in hand. He wore the uniform of a soldier, and at that time was a dark-haired, young-looking man, with a black moustache. His men followed him

with fixed bayonets, but many of them fell by the way before the vicious hand-to-hand encounter actually took place.

It must have been a thrilling time for the keen young leader, although he realised that his small force was being badly diminished and that he himself, marching in front, was an excellent target for his enemies.

Such, indeed, he proved, for Diaz was seriously wounded.

Nothing daunted, he rose again and, seizing his cap and holding it to his side to try and stop the flow of blood, rushed forward with even more spirit than before.

"In the first shots exchanged I was unfortunately struck by a ball in the body. This brought me to the ground, but I struggled violently, rose, and, again urging on my men, we charged into the enemy and put them to flight. They fell back upon the column on my front commanded by Colonel Salado himself, which we forthwith prepared to attack.

"At this moment, seeing the success that had attended our assault, the rest of our forces advanced rapidly in martial order, with all the courage inspired by the first rout of the enemy. This movement, coming after our deadly bayonet charge, caused our opponents to halt and turn. Our advance continued for 700 mètres. Once we had attained the height we were then ascending we could go no farther, and I halted my company, ordering them to again charge their rifles with ball in case of another attack.

"In their flight, which they accomplished with all speed, Salado's beaten troops had to cross a swiftly flowing stream, called Rio Verde (the Green River). There many men were lost. They had boats enough to transport all the fugitives in an orderly retreat. But order had given place to panic. The first men to reach a boat rowed off without waiting for others to fill it, and those who arrived after found no means of gaining the opposite bank. Many were drowned in trying to swim, or died by our balls, or by the voracity of the alligators that abound in these waters.

"Early in the encounter Colonel Don Pedro Gazca was killed and Colonel Salado was brought down soon afterwards.

"Salado, a far braver soldier than Gazca, had advanced at the head of his men to meet us, sword in hand. He dealt the sergeant of my company, Urrutia, such a blow on his head that it opened his skull. The man, however, survived the wound. Only the instant before Urrutia had been loading his gun. He had not time even to extract the ramrod when himself attacked, and rushed at his adversary with the bayonet. The thrust went home, and Salado fell dead.

"The enemy were now without leaders and completely routed. They lost many men in the pursuit, many more in the passage of the river, and those who had the skill and strength to swim against its rapid current left behind their arms, which fell into our hands.

"The action at Ixcapa was a disaster for them, a triumph for us, and was all the more meritorious as we encompassed it with less than half the strength of the force we met.

"Next day we were joined by Colonel Bustos. Colonel Velasco then went on to Jamiltepec, leaving all the wounded in the town of Cacahuatepec, about two miles from the scene of action."

Salado's revolt was thus crushed at one blow.

It is delightful to hear men who served with Porfirio Diaz at this time speak of his actions. His own simple, modest words, which are quoted above, merely state fact; but his fellow officers declare that the success of the day was chiefly due to his initiative and judgment, his clear head, his daring in the charge, and supreme effort still to lead his men though himself struck down. His wound was a severe one. The ball entered the side, breaking a rib, and passed through the body, but not right out. There was no surgeon available to give proper attention, and the loss of blood was so great that, strong man though he was, he nearly fainted from weakness and fatigue. All through the day he planned and arranged, he ordered and commanded; even when night fell he was still at his post,

and although looking pale and wan could not be persuaded to take rest.

That bullet, which nearly cost Diaz his life and Mexico her saviour, I saw nearly fifty years afterwards, for one day, after luncheon with the President and Madame Diaz in Mexico City, the conversation turned on this wound.

"Would you like to see the bullet?" enquired Madame Diaz.

"Certainly," I replied.

"Nonsense, my dear," he said, turning to his wife, adding modestly, "it is just an ordinary bullet, there is really nothing to see."

But she fetched it—a little cardboard box that had formerly held jewellery, although the cotton wool was no longer there, and inside lay a ball the size of a large cherry, or small plum.

For one year and eight months the young captain bore that bullet in his body. Although it often caused him great pain and continued discomfort, the fact did not deter him from taking part in six or seven engagements, and it was after these exciting moments when he had to move quickly, take great fatigue, or endure particular hardship, that the bullet asserted itself and gave him most pain. It was finally extracted by an American naval surgeon when he was on the coast. There were no Röntgen rays to help matters in those days.

A second bullet which I also saw lying in the same box is a shapeless mass of lead that had originally been the same size. It had entered the calf of his leg on August 5th, 1860, not so very long after he had got rid of the first, in an encounter at his native town of Oaxaca. By that time he was a colonel.

They were ugly enough looking things, those two bullets, for any man to have carried in his body for months, almost years, and they must have been an endless source of discomfort to a man in active service who never had time or opportunity to lie up, or even to save himself from hardship and fatigue. Little scratches he constantly had, but he considers such things too trivial to mention, as may be inferred from his modesty about the bullets, and his simple way of talking of them as:

"Rather inconvenient at the time!"

It is only after the lapse of years that one realises how much the fate of Mexico depended on that day. Had the injuries which Diaz received proved fatal, years of riot would have ended in the total extinction of Mexico as an independent State, and the country and its people would have been swallowed by the maws of the North.

Texas had gone, and America was hungering for more. Had that bullet proved fatal and General Diaz not lived to lift his country from degradation, poverty and vice, there would be no Mexico to-day. Her history would have been buried, her people overpowered, and perhaps exterminated, as the ancient Toltecs were exterminated, and the Aztecs over-ridden.

Fate ordained that Hidalgo should sound the note of Independence ; that Juárez should sweep away the decay of the Church ; and that Diaz should rise as a ruler to consolidate the land.

It was easy enough to treat a bullet wound as a slight affair after fifty years, but at the moment it occasioned considerable trouble. Juárez himself sent Dr. Calderón to look after the injured, whose condition in such a campaign was pitiable. Sometimes burnt by the tropical sun, sometimes drenched by the summer rains above and swamps of mud below, they were obliged to traverse the roads on improvised litters or on horseback, if not making their way by foot. The military requirements of the time necessitated almost constant movement. A cruel incident happened to Diaz on one of these marches. Lying ill and helpless, he was being carried on a rough bamboo litter when he was dropped to the ground. Rather than run the risk of a repetition of this sort of thing he preferred to mount a horse, and so continue the journey, in spite of the fact that every breath and every jolt caused intense pain.

Finally, after seven weeks' suffering, and still weak and ill, he arrived at Oaxaca on the last day of September.

As battles are fought nowadays, with their thousands slain, a hand-to-hand encounter between a thousand men may seem to have no great significance. Ixcapa would have been counted of little concern in modern times, when large masses of soldiers and stores can be moved with more or less ease by train ; but in

Mexico half a century ago this was quite a respectable force, and the close fighting was of the fiercest nature.

Men had to be marched hundreds of miles; villages were scattered; food was hard to procure; there were no rails nor telegraph wires to convey news. Everything had to be learned by word of mouth through constant scouting. Fighting in those days and in such a land was a serious matter, and in the close personal struggle one or other of the combatants invariably fell.

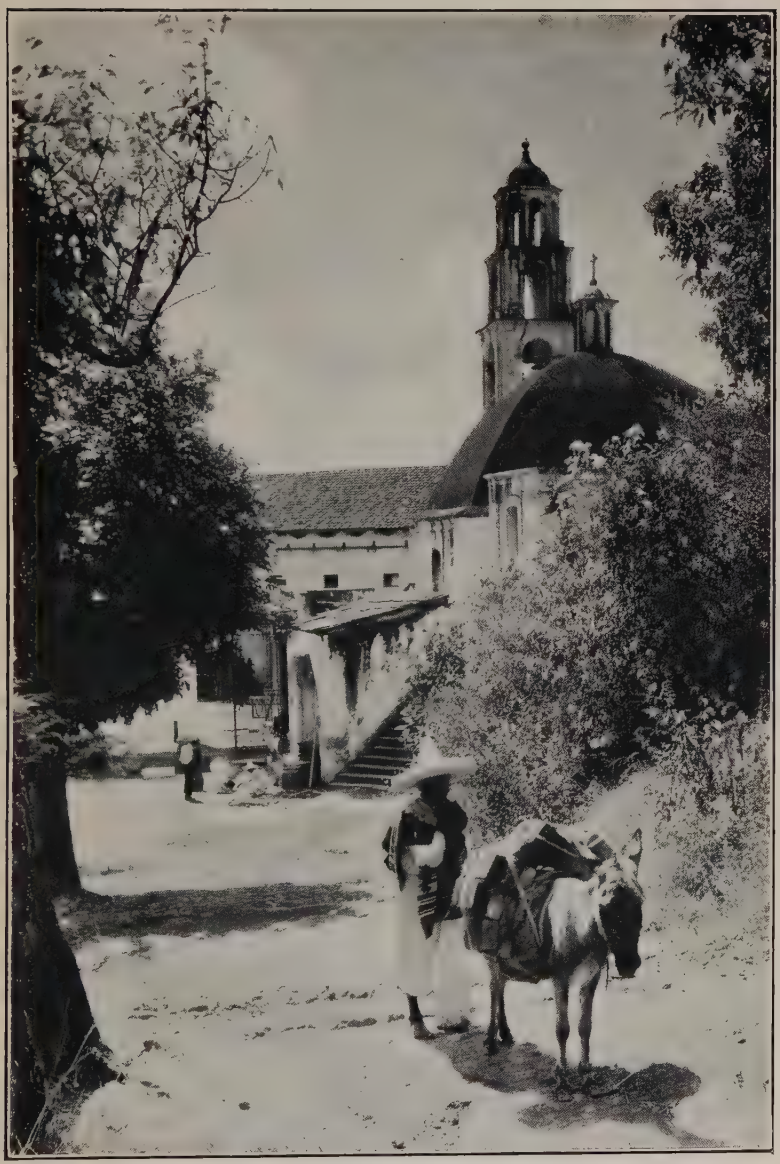
Then it must be remembered that not only were the Conservatives fighting against the Liberals, but constant mutiny among the troops, and revolutions among the people, had to be quelled. These were strenuous days for those in command, and cruel, hard, merciless days for the subordinates.

When possible, advanced guards were sent into villages to inform the people that a corps of soldiers was to be expected, and when the little body of men arrived the officers were each given a ticket telling them at which house they were to stay, but in many cases there was no time for this preparation, so rapid was the movement of the army, and food was confiscated, cattle raided, and as often as not, no receipts were given.

Of course the danger of sleeping out is intensified—or rather, was intensified—by the yellow fever then so prevalent; but thanks to science and the go-aheadness of the President of Mexico, who has employed all the latest methods for the extermination of this dire disease, yellow fever is fast dying out.

The army is now provided with tents, but in those far-off days things were of a much more rough and tumble order, and two or three months spent under the canopy of heaven was nothing out of the way. This was all very well in the dry season, but it must be remembered that Mexico also has its wet months, when the rain descends in tropical downpour, and then the soldiers' plight was bad indeed.

In the warmer months, or warmer districts, all the marching was done at night; and what wonderful nights those are in Mexico, when the deepest of blue sky appears far away overhead, the most brilliant stars twinkle, and meteors shoot across



A village scene.

[*Page* 48.

Photo by MRS. LUCIEN JEROME.]

Carrying home the water.

[*Page* 49.

the heavens. Falling stars are very common and add beauty to the scene, while the tropical mosses and hanging creepers look like lace against the moonlight.

As they marched during the cooler hours of the night, the men would sing to themselves in an under key, to the accompaniment of the tramp, tramp of hundreds of feet, but they never forgot to cross themselves as they passed a little wayside chapel, or touch their hats as they marched in front of a church. Sometimes the soldiers would pass a baby's funeral, and then they felt they were with the angels themselves. It is an old superstition in Mexico that if children die under a year old they are "angels" who have merely passed a few months on earth and then returned to their sphere in heaven.

As a rule the mother carries the empty coffin to the cemetery while the father bears his "angel" on his head. The child is laid out on a board, dressed to resemble some saint, such as San Antonio de Padua, El Santo Nino de la Dolorosa, or San Luis Gonzaga, and flowers and festoons hang all round the infant, while above the little body is an arch of blossoms. When they reach the cemetery, the "angel" is put into the coffin and buried. 'Tis a touching scene.

Or again, a child dies; it is only a baby—eight or ten months old, perhaps—still, its little life is ended. It has opened its eyes on the beauties of this world merely to close them again. Its pale little cheeks are now reddened and its eyes darkened in weirdly theatrical style. Its ears have heard the note of the mocking-bird, smiles have played upon its features; but that note will never cause another flicker of pleasure. The child is dead, and the mocking bird's song is its funeral dirge.

Poor mother! She is only a child herself, little more than fourteen, and yet the chord of maternity has been struck, deeply, oh, so deeply down in her woman's heart. Was ever more pathetic scene enacted in this world than the child-mother bewailing the loss of her baby doll? The little thing lies stretched out on a grass mat ready to be lifted into its tiny coffin, and sitting on her heels beside it is the poor mother who has given it life. She is not crying. Some grief is too deep for tears; she is barely

moaning as she sways herself to and fro and clenches her hands till the blood almost gushes from her slim brown fingers.

Poor, pretty little soul, how sad she is! Her baby, her angel, is dead. There seems nothing left now. It was all she had; what are the few reeds composing the hut, or the bits of family pottery? What is even the little picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe above her altar, when her babe lies dead? The men will be in from the fields presently, and then the singing and noise and death rites will begin in the village. Rockets and fireworks will be sent off to tell Heaven another child's soul is soaring to the angels. Now, however, she is alone; these precious moments are hers, all hers; she is growing from a child to a woman over the corpse of her own baby!

Such a scene the soldiers often witnessed, and never passed without crossing themselves devoutly and offering a prayer for the baby's soul.

The whole country was devout and the priestly power immense.

Salado's premature revolt in Jamiltepec, which ended in his death, was speedily put down, but it proved only the precursor of greater events. The centre of intrigue was not in the country districts, but in the capital itself. Liberals and Reactionaries were already fighting in the streets of Mexico City before the time came to put the Constitution of February, 1857, into effect. Comonfort nevertheless duly promulgated the law, and obtained a vote confirming him in the Presidency.

That he, at heart a devout religionist, had any real sympathy with measures against the Church of so sweeping a character is doubtful. A man of vacillating temperament, he pleased nobody. Ten days after he had sworn to maintain the Constitution he was persuaded to set it aside, dissolve Congress, and declare himself Dictator. In an effort to conciliate the Clericals he threw Juárez, who had become his Premier, into prison, then speedily released him. In open rupture by this time with the Liberals, and abandoned by the Conservatives and Clericals, who had used him temporarily for their own ends, Comonfort

fled to the United States, and remained in exile until the French invasion called him back to Mexico.

The Reactionaries, now masters in the capital, installed General Miguel Miramón as President. An element of romantic glamour still surrounds his name, for Miramón was one of the two hapless men shot by the side of the Austrian Archduke Maximilian at Querétaro, some years afterwards. A daring soldier and political intriguer, elegant in figure and manner, and extremely ambitious, he in many ways resembled Santa Anna, but on the testimony of Prince Felix Salm-Salm* was "no scientific general, and rather an indifferent strategist." He was at this time twenty-five years of age. By law, he was too young to hold the Presidency, which by virtue of his office devolved upon Juárez. In fact, he was at that time little more than a cypher in the hands of a more notable man, General Zuloaga, who was the real leader of the Reactionaries.

A plot to arrest the Liberal Deputies was disclosed too early, and seventy of them escaped to Querétaro—the city still famous for its domes and opals. Here they recognised Benito Juárez as constitutional President of the Republic. Henceforward not only was Mexico distracted by the sanguinary strife which is known in her history as the War of Reform, but by rival Presidents, both of whom assumed to rule the country.

Juárez pledged himself to fight for the Constitution of February, 1857, and for the destruction of the power of the Church and confiscation of its property, which some years later he accomplished by the laws that are associated with his name.

Establishing his Government, after many changes, at Vera Cruz, Juárez obtained recognition from the United States as the legitimate constitutional ruler of Mexico early in 1859, and held that position during the years in which a succession of "anti-Presidents," as they came to be called, were put up and thrown down by the different factions of Clericals, Conservatives, Reactionaries and others, which from time to time secured mastery in Mexico City.

* "Diary in Mexico in 1867." Vol. I., p. 34.

It is not necessary to follow all the battles, skirmishes, and troubles of those exciting years. A vast theatre was involved, extending across the centre of the country. The Constitutionalists, or "Juárists," held the eastern slope of the Sierra Madre, between the capital and Vera Cruz. At the outset, the fortune of war was adverse to the men whose cause was that of the freedom of Mexico against tyranny and anarchy. Juárez won the adhesion of some of the Mexican States, but lost men and leaders in encounter after encounter with the Reactionaries—many of his leaders, if truth be told, by open desertion to the enemy.

Miramón, emboldened by his successes, attempted to capture Vera Cruz and the Constitutional Government at one blow. A great number of men were uselessly sacrificed, but he failed to break down the resistance offered by the port, and hastening back to Mexico City, he arrived in time to join forces with General Márquez, and near by, at Tacubaya—famous for its beautiful old church and the rough heap of stones in the graveyard, beneath which the wife of Cortéz lies buried—inflicted a crushing defeat on the Juárists who were threatening the capital.

Diaz had not yet fully recovered from the severe wound he had received at Ixcapa when occasion again demanded his services for the defence of his birthplace. Oaxaca was besieged by the Reactionary General José María Cobos. In a desperate attempt to seize provisions from the enemy, of which his men were badly in need, he reopened his old wound, which had not thoroughly healed. In spite of this he maintained a gallant defence of the quadrants of the city entrusted to his command, and finally won a victory. General Rosas Landa, in command, impressed by the superiority of the besiegers in men and material, had talked of abandoning the town and cutting a way through the enemy's lines to the mountains.

Diaz and other younger officers obtained consent to a final assault on Cobos' troops, which was delivered with such force and effect that after several hours' fighting they were obliged to retire in the direction of Tehuantepec, and the siege was raised.

Rarely has a young officer at the outset of his military career

chanced upon such a school of training in actual warfare as fell to the lot of Porfirio Diaz. In the ten years which followed his first serious engagement at Ixcapa, not a single year passed—often not two months together—in which he was not in conflict with an enemy; men of his own country during the long agony of the War of Reform, and after its close with the French.

It is quite impossible to enter in detail into all the numerous battles in which he participated; the victory against Cobos at Jalapa in February, 1858, when Diaz was for the first time entrusted with the supreme command of an expeditionary force; the night march and daybreak assault upon Las Jícaras a few months later, when José Conchado, the Reactionary General, was killed, and Captain Diaz, for his distinguished services on that day, was promoted major of the National Guard; the fight at Mixtequilla, in June, 1859, when the Clerical leader, Colonel Espinosa, was killed; the actions at Márquesado, Mitla, and Ixtepeji.

Early in the course of these operations Diaz was selected for an important post. He was made Governor and Military Commander of the District of Tehuantepec.

It thus became his duty to uphold the Juárist cause in this somewhat remote corner of the country on the most slender means. The Constitutional Government was too much harassed and beset elsewhere to lend him assistance. The State was hostile and troubled. He found only a remnant of troops at hand, and being forced into almost daily skirmishes with bands of Clericals and Reactionaries, had the greatest difficulty in maintaining even his small force at full strength.

Not only, however, was he able to hold his own for a couple of years, but in this time of daily struggle he gave the first evidences of his administrative skill, straightening out the tangle into which the State's affairs had lapsed, purifying its civil government, and introducing, timidly and cautiously, education for the populace—a cause which, in later years, has become the passion of his life.

Marching through these regions of Tehuantepec, which is about a hundred miles over the mountains from Oaxaca, was a

serious matter. I have traversed the country on horseback, by boat, and by train, and can realise a little what all that fighting and marching meant in the heat of summer in a tropical land.

The undergrowth—six, eight, or perhaps ten feet high—was so close, so jumbled, so interwoven, that no human being could find space to stand. A lofty palm here, a bamboo there, an orchid or a mistletoe clinging to tall cedar or mahogany trees, while graceful tendrils descended from the boughs and took root in the ground below where wondrous yellow and black or scarlet and black snakes found shelter. All things grew so thickly together that it seemed impossible they could find room even to take root ; and every variety of vegetation appeared to thrive. To-day much of this land has been brought under cultivation, and a railway crosses the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a distance of two hundred miles.

This underwood is not so difficult to clear as might be imagined, when it is simply ignited and burnt. In the hot season everything is dry, and whole spaces of virgin forest are quickly cleared. No one could penetrate that jungle to cut it down, and yet these soldiers had to pass through it at times, or circumvent it by long marches. It is dangerous for pedestrians because it is difficult to get into at all, and is the home of snakes and lizards, scorpions and reptiles of all sorts, to say nothing of larger animals, such as the ocelot or large spotted tiger, wild cat, pumas (called in Mexico " el leon") and jaguars. Venomous mosquitoes add to its terrors. However, firing is comparatively easy, and can to a great extent be guided and controlled. The ash forms a manure, and a year later crops may be raised on what was previously primeval forest. Soldiers had no time to clear a road, however, and many fell sick and died of fever by the way.

Even to-day, at certain seasons of the year, Mexican Indians live entirely on the wild produce of the forest. Natives find bananas, pine-apples, cocoa-nuts, and dozens of tropical fruits, such as Manilla mango, anona, aguacate, sapote grande, and a variety of plums unknown in England. They can shoot with their blow-guns—bamboo tubes with a poisoned dart—game

Photo by RAVELL.]

A Mexican Indian.

[*Page* 54.

Diaz' little home at Tlalcotalpam when he turned farmer.

[*Page* 55.

for their larder, and, being lazy by temperament, prefer to live by the chase and the chance of the forest rather thàn by steady work. I saw many splendid figures and lovely faces among these Zapotecans when I was on the Isthmus. Tehuantepec is in the tropics. It lies in the most southern corner of Mexico, bordering on Yucatan, and is the narrowest strip of land between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.

Many quaint habits, customs and costumes still remain.

"Women's rights" are undisputed at Tehuantepec, where ninety per cent. of the trade is done by women, and a wife has to stand bond for her husband before he can get credit. Woman reigns supreme, and these good ladies prove beyond all doubt that because a woman can earn a livelihood it is not necessary for her to be either ugly or mis-shapen.

In this agricultural and feminine paradise Diaz fought for a long time, and he still speaks with enthusiasm of the beauty of the girls. They are dark-skinned, with glorious soft eyes and masses of wavy black hair; possess exquisite features and lovely teeth. They are the most beautiful women in Mexicò, and their carriage at once attracts attention. Small in stature, they are fine in limb, and seem born models for an artist. They have changed little since Diaz' young soldier days, for only now, through its railway and its harbour, is Tehuantepec becoming known to the world.

General Diaz was often back on the Isthmus during his military career, and at one time, after much fighting, he settled himself in a little house at Tlalcotalpam, which I saw many years later. Tlalcotalpam is only about fifteen miles from Alvarado, on the Vera Cruz side of the country, and is a delightful old Spanish town with a fine plaza, round which the populace walk every evening while the band plays. All the men walk one way and all the women on the reverse side, so that they may look at one another as they pass, when there is much opportunity for mild flirtations. They are very beautiful types of women, too, and to add to their attractions they leave their hair hanging down.

Porfirio Diaz' home was in a small street in the north-eastern

extremity of the town, and while he lived there he became quite an agriculturist, sugar being his chief cultivation. Report says that he was also such a good carpenter that he made the doors and windows of the house with his own hands.

But to return to the progress of the war. Only with the greatest difficulty were the impoverished Liberals able to maintain the struggle in the centre of the country, and in time the tide of ill-fortune came sweeping over the remote corner of Tehuantepec, where Diaz was keeping the cause alive. The defeat of a Liberal army under General Mejía at Teotitlan left the south-eastern States cut adrift and helpless before the Reactionary forces. Diaz received peremptory orders from the Juárist Government to abandon Tehuantepec, destroy his war material in order to prevent it falling into the enemy's hands, and retire upon Vera Cruz. He obeyed the spirit rather than the letter of his instructions, for he safely passed with the precious ammunition and stores through a hostile country, and did not leave them until he had seen them safely into the town of Juchitán, which was loyal to the Liberal cause.

Late in the year Diaz organised another daring enterprise. Placing himself at the head of a little column of three hundred men he marched through the night upon Tehuantepec, delivered a surprise assault upon the town at the first streaks of dawn, and, profiting by the confusion and misconception of the size of his force, drove out General Alarcon and the Conservative garrison and captured seven-hundred rifles.

This was the beginning of greater things. The Liberal cause in the South and East awoke to new life. Before many months had passed Diaz felt himself strong enough to take the offensive against the Reactionary leader, Cobos, and, having defeated that general's forces in two or three encounters, he set to work to organise a column to attack him in the city of Oaxaca.

Crossing the mountains Diaz found himself confronted by an army led by Marcelino Cobos. He fought throughout the day against unequal numbers, and for the first time in his career suffered defeat. With his surviving force, however, he effected a junction with a column of Juárists advancing from Ixtlán under

Colonel Salinas, and came within sight of Oaxaca. The combined force, numbering little over seven hundred men against two thousand, was still in insufficient strength to encircle the town, but they seized the most important strategical points in the neighbourhood, and held their own against constant attacks.

The recovery of Oaxaca by the Liberals not only marks an important page in the War of Reform, but in the fortunes of Diaz himself, as will be seen from his diary. The whole tale of stratagem and counter-stratagem, the attack with its unexpected developments, and the final victory are told by President Diaz himself as none other could tell them:

"The inferiority of our numbers," he says, "compelled us to plan a bold stroke such as the enemy could not foresee. This was a difficult task, for our civil friends who formed the local government and who lived among us, not understanding the importance of secrecy in military affairs, told their families in Oaxaca what were our intentions, or what they suspected we were going to do. By this they meant no harm, and merely wished to give consoling news to those concerned. But none the less it caused all our plans to miscarry. The stories went from mouth to mouth as such stories invariably do, until they reached the ears of the enemy.

"We were, therefore, obliged to confine ourselves to a few villages in the mountains, where there were no soldiers' quarters, and guard ourselves more against indiscreet friends than against our foes.

"While we were occupied in preparations for an assault on the town my brother Félix received a letter from Colonel Montero, who was commanding the 9th Battalion of Cobos' Army in Oaxaca, and whose friendship Félix had made when he was himself fighting with the Conservatives.* Montero proposed to assist us in taking the town in consideration of a reward of ten thousand pesos.

"In order to find out what service Montero might be able

* Don Félix Diaz had left the Conservative army and joined the Liberals five months before these events, as General Diaz explains in the personal references to his brother quoted from his diary in the next chapter.

to do us, and how far he was to be trusted, a reply was sent to him proposing that he should hold a conference with me in the night. A spot called Las Pozas Zarcas, a distance of one kilometre out of Oaxaca, was selected for the meeting. We removed our forces capable of entering into battle with all possible secrecy, and stationed them at a distance of five kilometres from the village where we were then hiding in the mountains.

"I advanced to meet Montero at the place designated, and concealed myself in the shadow of an arch of the town's old Spanish aqueduct to watch whether he came alone.

"He did not arrive, but sent a messenger with a note, in which he said that his conduct was suspected among the garrison. This hindered him from coming. He also wrote that our movements had been observed, and the whole garrison was on guard. We could, however, secure the Convent del Carmen without bloodshed, and also the forces defending it, if we would follow his instructions. These were that a man chosen for the service would advance within two hundred yards of the front of the garden gate of the convent. Then he would describe an arc with his arm, holding a lighted cigar in his hand. This signal would be answered from the gate, where the guard of the 9th Battalion was posted.

"After all was found to be safe, he said, we could enter the gate with a column. He warned us, however, that on our entrance the guard might rush to the interior of the fort. This movement must not alarm us, because its object was to surprise a force which was within the convent, and was not in the secret. The convent enclosed a passage known as the 'Puerta del Carmen,' and the garden gate gave access to this passage.

"Afterwards I knew that this was all a treacherous stratagem on the part of Montero, who hoped to get our forces trapped and exposed to his fire when unable to reply; for the roofs on each side of the street that leads to the convent gate were covered with soldiers, who would have shot us down mercilessly as we passed beneath them. In the entrance to the convent he had posted a battery of guns, hidden by the porch.

"Suspecting that his overtures were more or less a plot, I was inclined to fall in with them; adopting them only that I might carry out a counter-plot of my own. If we could persuade the 9th Battalion posted at the gate of our intention to enter, Montero would, I argued, concentrate his forces there, and so weaken the other defences of the town. Accordingly, I told off fifty men for service at the Convent del Carmen, and ordered the main body of troops, numbering seven hundred men, to make a simultaneous attack in two columns on the Convent de Santo Domingo, which lay some distance off in another part of the town.

"If the event should prove Montero's treachery, then we, and not its author, had every hope to gain from it.

"After arranging this plan, I returned to Colonel Salinas. He was waiting for me with the troops formed up at the foot of the hill. Scarcely had they arrived when the rains descended in torrents. This quickly made the roads impassable, and left our men with only the refuge of the woods for shelter. Under the trees where we were camped the rain came down in sheets, literally soaking us to the skin, and ran off down the rocky gorges in rapid streams which soon were so swollen that it was impossible to cross them. The rain prevented our moving, and hindered us from making the projected assault on that night.

"On the following day, the 4th of August, 1860, we found that a march to the mountains would be very difficult. Our soldiers, excited by the prospect of an assault and having collected their families in the villages for safety, would not willingly return to camp. While the leaders were discussing the situation, a force of the enemy suddenly appeared and opened fire on us. We advanced rapidly towards them, forcing them to return to their base, and established ourselves at the hacienda of San Luis, about two kilometres distant from the town. We also occupied the hacienda of Dolores. In these farms we passed the night.

"About three o'clock in the morning a deserter from the enemy arrived, and told me that under cover of darkness the

Reactionaries had crossed the fields, and must be near. I ordered that this information should be communicated to Colonel Don Ramón Cajiga, who was quartered at Dolores with the Juárez battalion. The adjutant returned, and informed me that the enemy was already midway between the two places. I accordingly begged Colonel Velasco to engage the force that had intercepted us with half of his battalion. This happened at the first streaks of dawn, and as the light strengthened we saw that a strong body of men had taken up a position in our rear, which would prevent our return to the mountains. It was composed of one half of the 9th Battalion.

"I ordered Captains Luis Cataneo and Fidencio Hernández to attack this force, and they drove them back on the main body of the enemy.

"At this time Marcellino Cobos was repulsed in an attack he had made on the hacienda of Dolores. This success enabled Colonels Cajiga and Velasco to join me with their respective forces. We were also reinforced by Captains Luis Cataneo and Hernández. Thereupon General José María Cobos, with the principal body of his troops and three batteries of artillery—without waiting for the retreating forces from Dolores, who were making a circuit to join him—began a resolute advance on the positions which I occupied in the hacienda of San Luis.

"We went out to meet Cobos, repulsed him, captured his heavier guns, and obliged him to retire to Oaxaca. I then intimated to Colonel Salinas that I would seize the chief square of the town while he marched against the fortress of La Soledad. After strenuous resistance in the streets through which I had to pass to reach the plaza, where I lost many officers and men, and was myself wounded by a ball which disabled my right leg, I succeeded in driving the enemy from the 'Plaza de Armas,' from the Palace, the Cathedral, and the Convent de la Conception, finally leaving to them only Santo Domingo and the Convent del Carmen.

"Unable to pass through the streets in consequence of frequent firing and the wounded condition of many of my men, I determined to cut through the walls of two houses, cross the inter-

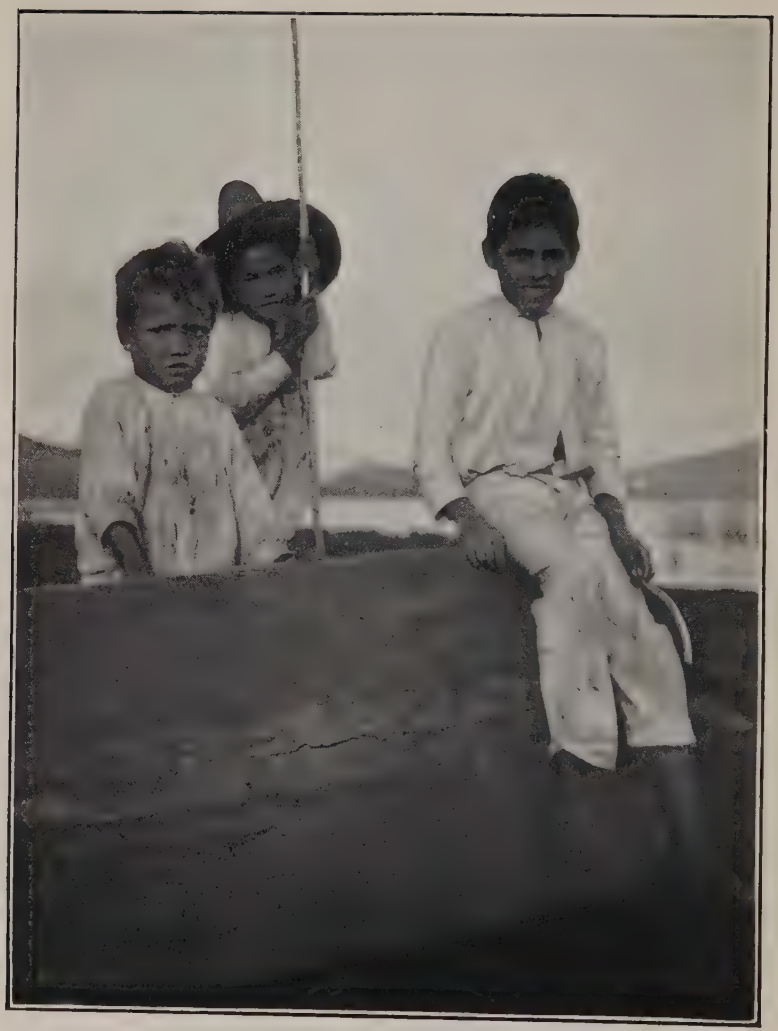
Photo by CONSTANTINE RICKARDS.]

Convent of El Carmen, Oaxaca.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Indian wigwams.

[*Page* 60.



Indian types.

[*Page* 61.

vening passages in the direction of the Convent de Santo Domingo, and thus bring my troops to a position, sheltered from the enemy's fire, from which I could make an assault on the convent. I intended to sally out with my men from the houses opposite the convent, and to superintend the attack from the roofs of these dwellings. This passage-making lasted all day and part of the night. Colonel Salinas meantime had joined me, and all the manœuvres were made with his approval.

"Our work was so well advanced that we were in a position to make the assault at daybreak next morning. Then we learnt that the enemy had broken down part of the garden wall of the Convent de Santo Domingo, and were escaping by that means.

"We almost feared frustration of our plans. I had been wounded since nine o'clock in the morning of the preceding day, and through loss of blood and weakness was unable to walk. Much of the time I had been on horseback, and I was scarcely able to sit up, much less to fight, in consequence of the inflammation of my leg. Colonel Salinas and the other leaders, unable to count upon me further, moved off with our troops to the Convent de Santo Domingo, as I thought to pursue the enemy, but they did not do so, for reasons of which I am still ignorant.

"The fighting on these two days, which resulted in the taking of Oaxaca, secured for me promotion to the rank of colonel in the permanent army, which was sent to me from Vera Cruz by President Juárez."

And so he was made Colonel. He, the poor son of a widow, the little boy of Oaxaca, at the age of thirty had actually obtained the summit of his childhood's dream.

But was he satisfied?

No; ambition had entered his soul; his horizon had extended; he had walked or ridden the length and breath of the land—which is two thousand miles long, and in some parts nearly half as wide—he had seen destitution and misery, had lived amongst conflict and strife. Now began to dawn a new vista

of hope, and he felt he could not stop; he must go on; he must do something great for his country—a country crying for help, a land of sunshine and wealth, now dreary and sad and penniless.

Yes, he must be up and doing. Revolution must be stamped out if the land was ever to attain success, if the children were to be fed and the coffers filled. Then it was ambition began to enter his breast, and he felt he must take his part in the saving of Mexico.

Diaz was still nothing but a soldier, a keen one 'tis true, and blessed with a splendid constitution; but as yet he was merely the rough and ready fighting man. He knew little of politics. Diplomacy meant nothing to him. He had never travelled outside his own country, and even Spanish was still somewhat of a foreign language to him, his own Zapotec-Indian coming more glibly even at that time to his tongue.

CHAPTER IV.

MEXICO'S STRUGGLE FOR REFORM.

It is interesting to note how simple and direct General Diaz' diaries always are. He states facts. He makes no comments. He neither praises nor blames. He does not enlarge or enthuse on any event, any action, or any victory.

These diaries are truly characteristic of the soldier. He is a man of few words. The bald truthfulness of his sentences is so like himself that one can really see the man photographed in paper and ink.

From this it must not be inferred that Diaz is only matter-of-fact, brisk, hard, and calculating, for he is just the reverse in many ways, and, as said elsewhere, he is two men in one. The romantic, warm-hearted, affectionate, loving creature on the one hand ; on the other, the stern, grave ruler of a people. He is strangely complex.

These diaries, with which the following pages deal somewhat fully, were often written under great stress, jotted down at odd moments either on the eve of action, or immediately after, and although some passages have been enlarged later, the simple, direct style, the absolute faithfulness to detail minus all attempt at embroidery remain.

Political considerations made it indispensable after the victory at Oaxaca that Salinas should remain at the head of the troops. It was not thought prudent at that stage to promote Diaz to the command.

Driven out of Oaxaca, Cobos withdrew his forces towards Zimatlán. Realising that by following this route he would be

cut off from his base of operations, and noting that his rear-guard was not attacked, he doubled back in order to reach the interior by the road from Oaxaca to Tehuacán. This brought him once more near to the town in which he had just suffered defeat. That Colonel Salinas committed a grave military blunder in not leading his troops in pursuit of the enemy in the first place after their flight from Oaxaca, and again when they returned within easy reach of his lines, no student of military affairs will doubt.

For this omission he was severely criticised by Captain Félix Diaz, the younger brother of Porfirio.

Indignant at the censure passed upon his inaction by his inferior officer, Colonel Salinas ordered that Félix Diaz should himself go out against the enemy, as he seemed to consider that course so urgent. The enterprise appeared foredoomed to failure. So insignificant was the body of troops detached for his command that to keep up the spirits of his men he had to resort to subterfuge, representing that reserves would be hurried after them. They had, too, but little ammunition. In the rear of the force came a mule-pack loaded with cartridge boxes, but few save its leader knew that many among the boxes so ostentatiously displayed contained nothing but stones.

Instead of defeat, Félix Diaz led his pursuing column to a victory which seems out of all proportion to its strength, for the force numbered only two hundred men. General Diaz just refers to it :

"Félix overtook Cobos on August 9th, 1860, and defeated him in La Seda, taking ten cannon and many prisoners, among them about four hundred dragoons of the Guides, Cavalry, and Grenadiers. These men came over to our side, and formed the nucleus of a regiment which he afterwards organised as the 'Oaxaca Lancers,' and with them he continued the campaign under the orders of Colonel Salinas."

There are many charming references in Diaz' diary to his brother Félix, for whom he entertained a strong affection. Their devotion began in the old home, and despite their being engaged

for a time in different political camps, strengthened as years went on. Busy as was the life of Porfirio, we see constant evidences in his career of this sympathetic trait:

"My brother Félix," he says, "was born on May 2nd, 1833, five months before the death of my father. Although there was not much difference in our ages, I, being the elder, was looked upon by him more as a parent than a brother. He was a most efficient helper in my military career, and sealed his devotion to me with his blood.

"My brother was very fond of all physical exercises. Robust in constitution, he was a man of great muscular strength, and being gifted in an especial degree with those qualities which help to make a soldier, he showed valour and calmness in all the encounters in which he engaged. He had natural talent, although it was little cultivated. His was a merry nature—at times, in solemn moments, too much so, perhaps. In critical phases of a battle his active mind would suggest the happiest devices and the most ingenious stratagems for thwarting the enemy, and how often were these attended with the best results!

"Félix began his career in the Seminary of Oaxaca in 1846. During his first year of the study of philosophy in the Institute of Sciences and Arts of the State, he told me of his strong desire for a military vocation, and later he offered himself as a volunteer in an artillery battalion.

"I was unwilling that he should adopt a soldier's life unless he could receive an efficient training. So I obtained from the Government permission for him to leave his battalion, whereupon I sent him, as I had power to do, to Mexico City, to take his place in the Military College. In this course I was assisted by the position and influence of my old teacher, Pérez, in the capital.

"Félix was the contemporary at the Military College of Don Miguel Miramón, who was captain of his company; later he became a general, was made President by the Reactionaries, and, finally, was an upholder of Maximilian, beside whom he was shot. After two years' study in the college, my brother obtained the position of ensign, and was sent to put down a native rising on

the Texan frontier. Unfortunately I do not remember any of the interesting episodes of his life during this period, although I have heard him speak of some notable incidents. I only know that he carried on a very active campaign against the turbulent natives of Sonora, and that he sustained a wound from an arrow.

"Subsequently he was promoted to be lieutenant-colonel, and fought in the Conservative ranks. My brother was in the army when General Santa Anna returned to power in 1853.

"When I was in Tehuantepec in the years 1858 and 1859, my brother was much concerned to think that I was fighting on the opposite side. A report reached him that I had fallen in an encounter in Oaxaca, and this news decided him to separate from the Reactionary forces. Profiting by the fact that he was not at the time with the fighting ranks, but was on the Staff of General Leonardo Márquez, he petitioned for leave, obtained it, and came to offer his services to us at Oaxaca, in March, 1860. On his march Félix learnt that the notice of my death was false. After our meeting he enlisted at my side, and henceforth served the Liberal party.

"We were together in all the operations of the second siege of Oaxaca, in our retreat to the hills, in the battle of Ixtepeji, in the action of San Luis, and in the actual taking of the city of Oaxaca."

As soon as the Constitutional forces had re-taken possession of Oaxaca, Don Marcos Pérez, whose intimate association and influence with Diaz in his student days has already been alluded to, was established as Provisional Governor of the State. The appointment was not popular, and there was soon an agitation to drive him from office. Diaz writes :

"Knowing the dislike felt towards Don Marcos Pérez, my old and beloved teacher, and the intention to overthrow him, I sought to win over Colonel Salinas, who had thrown in his lot with the malcontents. He assured me that he would take no steps against Pérez if I would persuade my old friend to remove from office two of the political leaders whose actions had occasioned no little public indignation.

"As I was still lame from my wound, Pérez used to visit me at my quarters. I remarked to him on one of these occasions that Salinas was a most estimable and honourable man, but that he was much prejudiced against certain political leaders. Pérez answered me that he had heard nothing except rumours, without proof to justify them, and that he could not abandon his friends.

"I then assured him that I would do nothing myself to render his rule difficult, nor would I permit any organised agitation against him, adding that he could be sure that so long as I was in Oaxaca he would have no trouble. This he well knew without my saying so, because my friendship with him obliged me to act thus; but I made it clear that unfortunately I could not be responsible for what might happen after my departure, which could not be long delayed.

"I left Oaxaca shortly afterwards. When I had gone, Pérez was at once charged with not having presented the annual 'Memoria' required by the Constitution. Then Don Ramón Cajiga was nominated Provisional Governor by the Legislature, and named Licentiate Don José Esperón as his secretary, a man who put himself at the head of the conspiracy against Pérez.

"Thus ousted, Pérez never survived the blow and the deception of those he had believed to be his friends. He died on August 19th, 1861. In him the Republic lost one of its most distinguished sons."

Barely had Diaz recovered from his wound sufficiently to mount a horse than he left Oaxaca, and plunged once more into the fighting which continued, with varying fortunes to the combatants, in the Eastern States. The War of Reform dragged out some months longer; the wealth of the Church, which was the chief mainstay of the Reactionary cause, was not yet exhausted, but the disruption had already begun. Early in the same year Miramón had returned to his original design of capturing Vera Cruz, which remained the centre of Juárez' Government, and again laid siege to the city.

Vera Cruz, although on the Gulf of Mexico, is very hot, and the vegetation tropical. A European finds it an effort to do

anything. In the neighbourhood green parrots fly overhead, and always in couples. One never sees a solitary parrot; they are birds that seem to like company, and prefer to screech in pairs. Perhaps parrots gossip, and therefore meet in couples to wreck their neighbours' reputations! Flocks of gorgeous-hued macaws often cloud the sky; spider-monkeys continually screech in the virgin forest; terrapin swim in the water; one of the two kinds of poisonous lizards, known as the Mexican helodern, crawls under the verdure, hiding its deadly head, while lovely green lizards (Iguana) about eighteen inches to two feet long, lie upon the banks. The latter make excellent food.

Strange round objects clustering about the trees, resembling ships' buffers, attracted my attention when I visited this fascinating spot during my travels in 1901.

"What are they?" I once asked.

"Hornets' nests," was the cheerful reply; "and those other bag-like things are the 'hang-nests' of the lovely orange-coloured bird you see with black tail and wings."

There are hundreds of hornets' nests near Vera Cruz. What charming things to disturb! Egrets fly overhead, and on the lagoon are thousands of buzzards along the water's edge, tall, black, and forbidding, waiting for their carrion prey. In the year 1860, when so much fighting went on in these regions, there was often not time to bury the dead before these vile buzzards set to at their gruesome work.

Such sights were too common and the times too fearsome for Mexicans to trouble over in those terrible days. A couple of natives quarrelled. Immediately they drew their machetes (swords) and thrust at one another. In a few moments one was carved to pieces. His friend dragged his body to the side of the road, stole his hat, shirt and sandals, and thrust the corpse into the ditch for the buzzards to feed upon. They made short work of the man. No enquiries were set on foot, and the story was too usual to be remembered long.

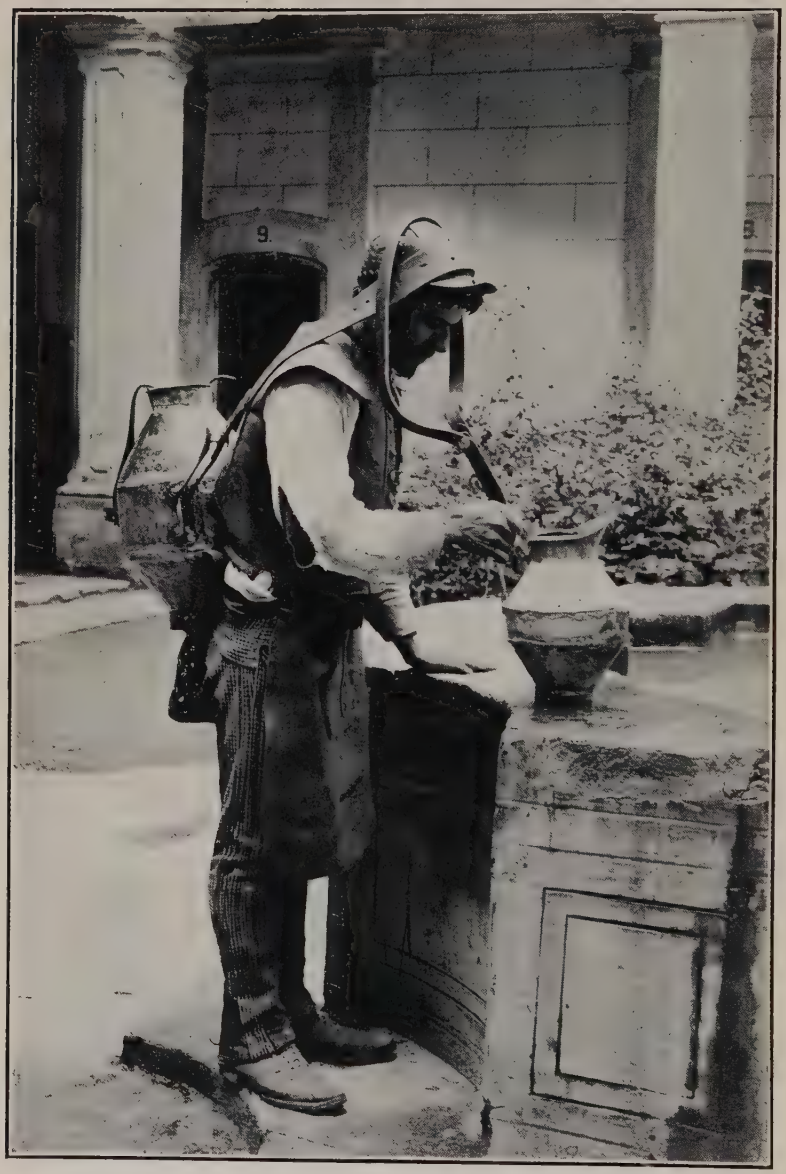
Murders of the same kind are not unknown to-day in the wildest parts of Mexico, which is a land of incongruity, civilisation and barbarism marching hand in hand. The civilisation

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

A Mexican door.

Mexican-Indian boat.

[*Page* 68.



Water seller at the well.

[*Page* 69.

of the capital is amazing, the barbarism of some of the mountain districts still astounding.

An incident of the siege of Vera Cruz is of importance, as it was the first indication of that action by foreign Powers which a few years later was to alter the whole course of Mexico's history. Juárez, as has already been said, had been recognised as President of Mexico by the United States. Miramón had purchased two vessels at Havana and armed them to co-operate with his land forces. Juárez requested the commander of the United States squadron to examine these ships, claiming that they should be treated as pirates. The American frigate was fired on when so doing, whereupon her captain at once seized the ships.

Later, the vessels were released, but the delay was of immense importance to the Juárists. Vera Cruz was bombarded for days, Mexican and foreign property suffering alike in the consequent destruction ; but the second siege failed no less signally than had the first, and Miramón withdrew his dispirited soldiers to the capital.

It was at this darkest moment of the war, when besieged in Vera Cruz, that Juárez issued his first decree sequestrating the lands of the Church, a step which eventually deprived the Reactionaries of their chief financial resource. Then came the law making marriage a civil institution only, depriving the clergy of further emoluments. This was followed by the law for religious toleration and the civil appropriation of the cemeteries.

It was beyond Juárez' power to enforce these Laws of Reform at the time, but they proved that his determination to destroy the abuses of Clerical ascendancy had in no way been affected. Their issue had great influence upon the country. No previous effort at reform had ever been upheld in face of such obstacles as Juárez had encountered, and as his honesty of purpose was realised, the unity of his followers strengthened, and proportionately the forces of the Reactionaries broke into factions. Events of the war turned in his favour. General Ortega, his commander-in-chief, captured Guadalajara, one of the Clerical

strongholds. Miramón, marching to meet him, was routed and driven back. The victorious Juárists then concentrated their forces in the vicinity of the capital. At Calpulalpam was fought out on December 22nd, 1860, the decisive battle of the War of Reform. On the two sides twenty thousand men were engaged.

It must no doubt be accounted ill luck on the part of so strenuous a soldier as Porfirio Diaz that he had no part in this final triumph of the Constitutional cause, for which he had fought so long. With his division he made a forced march to effect a junction with General Ortega, but when he arrived the battle had been already won, and he was only in time to join in the pursuit of the beaten Reactionaries, who, broken and in disorder, were flying back to the capital. The triumph of the Liberals was complete. Mexico City lay open to them.

Juárez thus found himself to be, in fact, what for so long he had been in title only, the head of the Mexican State. Constitutional government was installed in the capital to take the place of Clerical and military rule. He demanded an election on the Constitution of 1857, and was voted President by a large majority in May, 1861. The decrees of Vera Cruz were soon put into operation.

The country was suffering from all the ills that follow in the wake of civil war. Officials necessary to uphold his position were lacking to Juárez. Constant warfare had robbed every calling of its most strenuous men. The clergy, though beaten in the struggle, were not cowed, and were exciting enmity and trouble wherever they could.

In spite of these difficulties Juárez set himself to put affairs in order, and on the basis of his Laws of Reform above mentioned, he instituted more decisive measures against the Church. Though meeting with much opposition, he gradually gained a reputation for fairness of dealing, and laid the foundations of sound constitutional principles throughout the government of Mexico.

Before this end was attained the country was for two or three years further distracted by guerilla warfare. Miramón had fled from Mexico after the disaster to his army at Calpulalpam, but the ablest of his generals, Márquez, Mejía and Cobos,

with the more desperate of their followers, took to the mountains and from these fastnesses continued their resistance.

Leonardo Márquez, "The Tiger of Tacubayo," is one of the most sinister figures in Mexican history. A product of a time when a career was open to every adventurer who would give his sword to the cause of reaction and clerical domination, he came to the front in the early days of the War of Reform. His personal bravery was never questioned; but for his cruelty and rapacity it would be difficult to find a parallel, bearing in mind that his deeds date not from the days of Cortéz, but are within living memory.

After a victory against the Juárists at Tacubayo, he distinguished himself by shooting down his prisoners in cold blood. A deed which especially brands his name with infamy was perpetrated on the same day. Six medical men had come out from the capital to care for the wounded and defeated Juárists left on the field. Márquez had these ministers of mercy lined up and shot dead.

He had been placed under arrest by his own followers for robbing a convoy of $600,000. A man of no sense of honour, with no scruples, he was responsible for most of the terrible atrocities and barbarities which marked the progress of the guerilla warfare. Ten thousand dollars were offered for Márquez' head by Congress after his murder of Ocampo under most revolting circumstances. This Melchor Ocampo, next to Juárez, was the most remarkable of the Reform leaders. A politician, a diplomat, an earnest man of science, a counsellor, but at no time a soldier, Ocampo had received high honours.

It had been the object of one of the guerilla bands to seize him, but in making their capture they mistook their man. An innocent life would have been sacrificed had not Ocampo himself come forward to save it. He was taken before Márquez, by whose orders he was shot on the roadside, and his body hanged to a tree. Such was Márquez' daring that he appeared before the capital, and actually quartered a cavalry column on the town.

Diaz, when the stress of the War of Reform was over, had returned to Oaxaca, and had been honoured by his native State

with election to the new Congress as deputy for the district of Ocotlan.

Congress was in session in June, 1861, when firing was heard quite close to the Council Chamber. The President advised the deputies and people to be calm. Diaz at once begged leave to speak, and asked that he, being a soldier, might be permitted to join his comrades in the fight. The attack proved but a feint on Márquez' part to cover the march of his main force to the east.

Colonel Diaz, taking over the command of the Oaxaca brigade, was soon off in hot pursuit. Márquez, however, knew the country too well, and moving among the mountains succeeded for six weeks in avoiding any decisive conflict.

Diaz and his troops were often close upon him, and then just as it seemed possible to catch their quarry, Márquez gave them the slip and was off again.

The formidable Reactionary general was at length routed by the Oaxaca brigade, of which Diaz, owing to the illness of its leader, continued temporarily in command. The action at Jalatlaco, in the mountains, was fought under circumstances which brought conspicuously under notice Diaz' military skill and daring initiative. The attack began in a night of extraordinary darkness—exceptionally dark for Mexico. In an attempt to pass by Santiago Tianguistengo, Márquez found himself cut off by General Ortega, who was in command of the pursuing army of Constitutionalists. So intense was the gloom that the leader could follow only vaguely the movements of a portion of his forces.

A report reached General Ortega that Diaz, with his detached column, had been overwhelmed and captured, so he gave orders to his men to stand on the defensive until daybreak. In the confusion one of his advanced batteries firing into the Reactionaries had been dropping shot among Diaz' soldiers, doing as much harm to them as to the enemy.

Diaz sent a message to the General requesting him to cease firing and to forward him more ammunition. A movement by Márquez to storm the heights held by Ortega was developed

before the messenger could arrive, and as the columns were advancing Diaz fell upon their flank. Numerically his force was much inferior, but other advantages were with him. The attack, led by Colonel Diaz in person, was pressed home with great determination. The Reactionaries, surprised and bewildered at the turn of events, were completely defeated and scattered, and Diaz brought to his General news of the victory, with the capture of seven guns, the whole of their foes' baggage, and some seven or eight hundred prisoners.

The fight at Jalatlaco marked another step in the rise to power of the present President of Mexico. General Ortega, reporting the engagement to President Juárez, warmly commended his soldierly qualities, and said: "I wish for the promotion of Porfirio Diaz. I should be ashamed to be a general if he, after what occurred in my presence and under my command, does not immediately become one also."

Diaz himself records his promotion very simply:

"For the victory at Jalatlaco I was rewarded by the Government with the rank of General of Brigade."

And so the boy whose greatest dream of success had been some day to become a colonel, found himself a brigadier-general.

How proud he must have been! What delight the position must have given him, a position he had worked hard to gain; and yet, with that strange simplicity which always characterises him, he merely noted the fact in a few words in his Diary, as though it were nothing at all. In less than a couple of years he reached the rank of "General of Division" as reward for skill and valour when confronting a foreign invader. This was the highest rank he could attain in the army, in which he continued in active service for another fourteen years, and still holds his commission.

One day when I was sitting talking to General Diaz, he retailed many of these stories of adventure. At last, I asked in despair:

"Can you not give me some list of these battles and events, so that I may be able to keep the dates correct?"

"I can have my military record copied for you if you

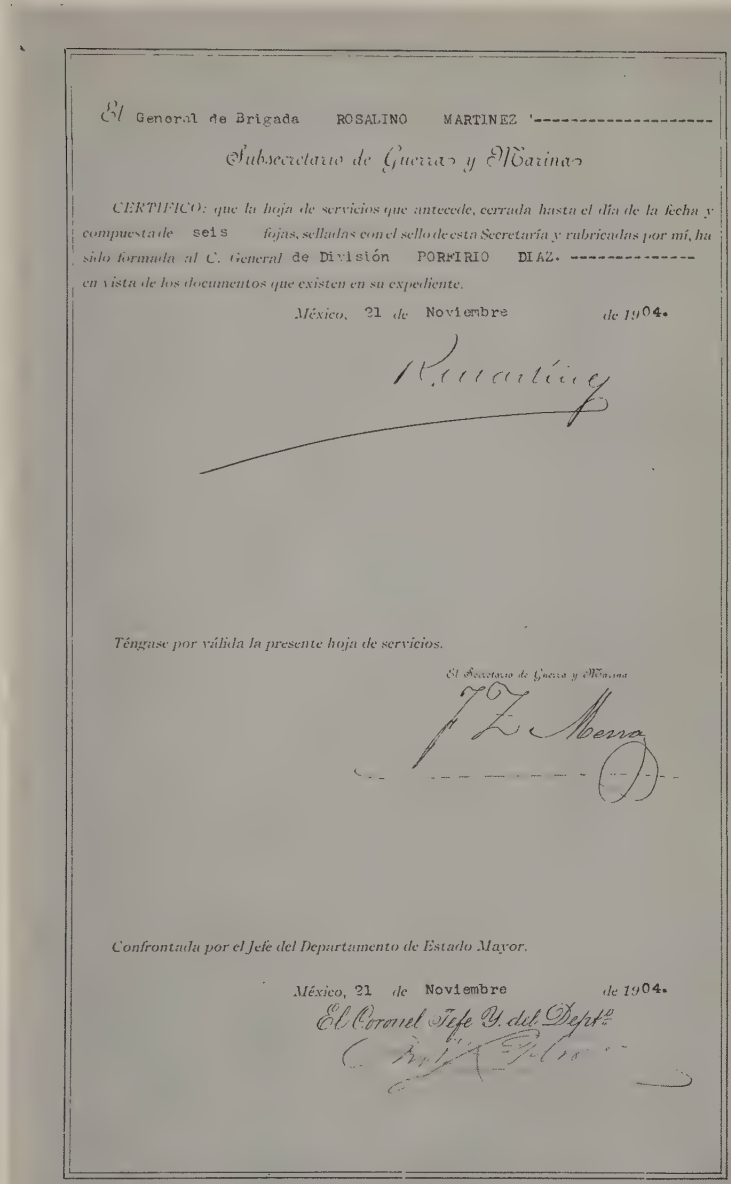
wish. In the Archives of the Mexican War Office official lists of the doings of all soldiers are kept."

"Anything that would be useful, I shall be grateful for," I replied.

Two days later (November 22nd, 1904) he handed me the following most interesting and valuable document, showing the whole of his fifty-four years' military career.

Just like General Diaz! Not only did he have it copied for reference, but to vouch for its authenticity he made the Minister of War and other officials duly sign it, so that it should be in every way an official record. The last page showing the signatures has accordingly been photographed for use as an illustration.

Here, then, is the life record of the most marvellous man of the age, which his own son had never seen until I showed him this remarkable document.



El General de Brigada ROSALINO MARTINEZ '----------

Subsecretario de Guerra y Marina

CERTIFICO: que la hoja de servicios que antecede, cerrada hasta el día de la fecha y compuesta de seis fojas, selladas con el sello de esta Secretaría y rubricadas por mí, ha sido formada al C. General de División PORFIRIO DIAZ. ----------
en vista de los documentos que existen en su expediente.

México, 21 de Noviembre de 1904.

Téngase por válida la presente hoja de servicios.

El Secretario de Guerra y Marina

Confrontada por el Jefe del Departamento de Estado Mayor.

México, 21 de Noviembre de 1904.

El Coronel Jefe Y. del Dept.

Photograph of the original document and signatures.

[*Page* 74.

Photo by Cox.]

On the Viga Canal.

[*Page* 75.

[*Translated from the Spanish.*]

MEXICAN REPUBLIC.

SECRETARY OF WAR AND MARINE.

OFFICIAL DEPARTMENT.

STAFF OF THE ARMY.

PAPER SHOWING SERVICES of the General of Division PORFIRIO DIAZ. Age 74. Native of Oaxaca, in the State of that name. Married. Services and military performances as follows:

DATES ON WHICH HE OBTAINED HIS OFFICIAL POSTS, AND THE TIME OF SERVICE IN EACH.

DAYS.	MON.	YEARS.	RANK AND OFFICE.	YEARS.	MON.	DAYS.
24	April	1856	Commandante of the Battalion of the National Guard of the Government of the State of Oaxaca (Militia) ...	3	2	13
22	Dec.	1856	Captain of Infantry, id. id. id. (Auxiliary of the Army)			
22	July	1858	Commandante of Battalion, id. id. ...			
6	July	1859	Lieut.-Col. of Infantry, id. id. id. ...	0	4	19
25	Nov.	1859	Colonel of id. id. id. id.	3	6	4
22	Aug.	1860	Id. of Mexican Army for the President Beñito Juárez			
23	Aug.	1861	Rank of Brigadier-General for id. ...	0	4	15
29	May	1863	General id. id.			
14	Oct.	1863	General of Division of the Army ...	41	1	7
			Time counted double according to the Decree of 2nd Dec., 1878, and certificate sent 21st of Oct., 1881 ...	5	6	13
Total time of service until 21st November, 1904, where this document ends				54	1	11

CORPS IN WHICH HE HAS SERVED, WITH CLASSIFICATION OF TIME.

	Years.	Months.	Days.
In the National Guard (Militia) Ixtlan portion, he served in the 2nd Battalion of the Militia of the State of Oaxaca, and in the regular Forces of the same State, from 24th April, 1856, to the 1st July, 1861	5	2	8
Deputy to the Congress of the Union with Command of a force that marched from this Capital for a Campaign in the State of Mexico, as "Major of the Staff" of the Brigade of Oaxaca, and afterwards with Command of the said Brigade from 2nd July, 1861, to 17th May, 1863	1	10	16
General in Chief of the Army of the East from 18th May, 1863, to February 9th, 1865.. ..	1	8	22
Prisoner of War to the French Army from 10th February, 1865, to 21st September of the same year	0	7	12
General in Chief of the Army and Eastern Line from 22nd September, 1865, to 21st June, 1867	1	9	0
With Command of the 2nd Division of the Army, from June 22nd, 1867, to 25th May, 1868	0	11	4
In barracks from 26th May, 1868, to 14th September, 1870	2	3	19
Deputy to the Congress of the Union from 15th September, 1870, to 7th November, 1871	1	1	23
Defending Noria and Tuxtepec, from November 8th, 1871, to 30th November, 1876 ..	5	0	23
On different Commissions for the Service as the details of that period show in this paper from December 1st, 1876, to the close of the period here included	27	11	21
Time counted double according to the Decree of December 2nd, 1878, and certificate sent on October 21st, 1881	5	6	13
Total of services to 21st November, 1904, when this document ends	54	1	11

CAMPAIGNS, MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS AND MERITORIOUS SERVICES.

1857.

Served:

In the action of Ixcapa against Col. José María Salado, on the 13th of August, in which he (Diaz) was wounded and Col. Salado defeated and killed.

In the defence of two Quadrants of the City of Oaxaca, from 26th December to January 16th, 1858, on which date he attacked and took the aforesaid fortress, which was defended by the leader Cobos.

1858.

In the taking of the fortress of Talapa (State of Oaxaca), defended by the same leader, on February 25th.

In the action of Las Jícaras against José Conchado on April 13th, when this leader was killed.

1859.

In the action of Mixtiquilla against Lieut.-Col. Espinosa on June 17th, in which this leader was killed.

In the action of Tehuantepec against Manzeno, on November 25th.

1860.

In the action of Mitla against the leader Marcelino Cobos on January 21st.

In the action of the fortress of Soledad against the same leader on February 2nd.

In an action at Marquesado against Casimiro Acebal, on March 9th.

In an action at Ixtepeji against Anastasio Trejo, on May 15th.

In the taking of the fortress of Oaxaca on August 5th, under the orders of General Salinas, in which Diaz was wounded; and for bravery, the rank of Colonel was conferred upon him.

1861.

In the action of Jalatlaco against Ex-General L. Márquez, under orders of General Jesús González Ortega, on August 13th, in which his good conduct won the rank of General of Brigade.

In the Battle of Pachuca, under orders of General S. Tapia, on October 20th.

1862.

In the action of the Heights of Acultzingo, against the French Army, commanded by General Lorencez, Diaz being under the orders of General Ignacio Zaragoza, on April 28th.

In the battle of May 5th against the French Army, when Diaz was under the orders of the same General Zaragoza.

In the battle of La Ceiba against the same army, on June 14th, when Diaz was under the orders of General Zaragoza.

1863.

In the siege of the fortress of Puebla, from March to May, under the orders of General Jesús González Ortega, against the French Army, commanded by General Forey.

In the actions of Tasco on the 26th, 27th and 28th of October, against the Intervention, in chief command.

1864 and 1865.

In the action of San Antonio Nanahuatipan, against General Curtois d'Hurbal.

In the siege of the fortress of Oaxaca, against Marshal Bazaine, from December, 1864, to February 9th, 1865, in chief command.

The same in Tehuitzingo, against Imperialists, on September 22nd, in chief command.

In the action at Piaxtla against Carpintero, on September 23rd, in chief command.

In the same at Jultzingo, against Bissoso, on October 1st, in chief command.

In the same at Comitlipa, against the same, on December 4th, in chief command.

1866.

In the action at Tlaxiaco, against Trujeque, on January 6th, in chief command.

In the action at Lo de Soto, against General José María Ortega, on February 25th, in chief command.

In the combat at Putla, against Trujeque, on April 14th, in chief command.

In the action of Huajuapam, against Viriker, on September 5th, in chief command.

In the battle of Miahuatlan, against Carlos Oronoz and E. Testar, on October 3rd, in chief command.

In the action of Nochistlan, against Count Ganz, on September 23rd, in chief command.

In the battle of Carbonera, against Krikar, October 18th, in chief command.

In the taking of the fortress of Oaxaca, defended by Ex-General C. Oronoz, October 31st, in chief command.

In the action of La Chitova, against Remigio Toledo, on December 19th, in chief command.

1867.

In the storming and taking of the fortress of Puebla, on April 2nd, which was defended by Ex-General H. Noriega, in chief command.

In the battle of San Diego Notario, against Ex-General L. Márquez, on April 6th, in chief command.

In the action of San Gregorio, April 8th, against Márquez, whom Diaz was pursuing.

In the battle of San Lorenzo, against the same Ex-General, on April 10th, in chief command.

In the siege and taking of the fortress of Mexico, against the same, Ex-General Márquez, in chief command, from April 12th to June 21st, when the fortress surrendered.

1870.

In the action of Huajuapam, against General I. Alatorre, in chief command.

1876.

In the taking of the fortress of Matamoros, against General La Barra, on April 2nd, in chief command.

In the action of Icamole, against General C. Fuero, on May 20th, in chief command.

In the battle of Tecoac, against General I. Alatorre, on November 16th, in chief command.

COMMISSIONS UNDERTAKEN AND MERITORIOUS SERVICES RENDERED.

In the year 1861 he was elected Deputy to the Congress of the Union.

On July 2nd of the same year he undertook the command of a force for a campaign in the State of Mexico.

In the year 1873 he was elected Deputy to the Congress of the Union.

In the year 1884 he was named President of the Mexican Commission for the New Orleans Exhibition.

	Years.	Months.	Days.
Was President of the Republic from 1st December, 1876, to November, 1880	4	0	0
Was Secretary of Fomento from 1st December, 1880, to November 30th, 1881.. ..	1	0	0
Was Constitutional Governor of the State of Oaxaca and Magistrate of the Supreme Court of Justice from 1st December, 1881, to November 30th, 1884	3	0	0
President of the Republic from December 1st, 1884, up to the date on which this document ends	19	11	21
Total	27	11	21

Rewards Obtained for Military Actions.

PROMOTIONS.

Won the rank of General of Brigade in recognition of the good services rendered in the action of Jalatlaco, on August 13th, 1861.

Earned the position of Full General of Brigade by his brilliant service in the campaign against the French Army, and particularly on the 5th of May, 1862, and in the siege of the fortress of Puebla, in 1863.

GOVERNMENT DECORATIONS.

Special Decorations for the storming of the fortress of Puebla, on April 2nd, 1867.
Distinguishing Badge for the War of Reform.
Medal of Honour for the battle of Pachuca.
Medal of Honour for the battle of the Heights of Acultzingo.
Medal of Honour for the battle of May 5th, 1862.
Cross for the siege of Puebla, in 1863.
Cross of 1st Order for having fought in the French Intervention.
Cross of Constancy (granted for perpetual service) of the 3rd Order.
Cross and Star of Constancy of 2nd Order.
Cross and Star of Constancy of 1st Order.

DECORATIONS OF THE STATES.

Decoration presented by the Legislature of the State of Guerrero for having fought against the French Intervention and against the Empire (Maximilian).

Medal of Honour granted by the Legislature of the State of Chihuahua with Declaration of Merit.

Honourable Decoration granted by the Legislature of Oaxaca for the actions of Mihuatlan and Carbonera, and the siege and taking of that fortress.

Honourable Decoration granted by the Legislature of the State of Puebla for the assault and taking of the aforesaid fortress on April 2nd, 1867.

FOREIGN DECORATIONS.

Grand Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic (Spain).
Grand Cross of the Royal and Distinguished Order of Carlos III. (Spain).
Grand Cross of the Order of the Sword (Sweden and Norway).
Grand Cross of the Tower and Sword for Valour, Loyalty and Merit (Portugal).
First Class of the Order of the Liberator (Venezuela).
Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour (France).
Grand Cross of Cristanemo (Japan).

Grand Cross of the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus (Italy).
Grand Cross of the Order of Military Merit (Spain).
Grand Cordon of the Order of Leopold (Belgium).
Grand Cross of the Order of the Red Eagle (Prussia).
Grand Cross of the Royal Hungarian Order of St. Stephen (Austria and Hungary).
Decoration of First Class with Grand Cordon of the Order of the Lion and the Sun, in brilliants (Persia).

NOTES.

Valour—Proved in the contemporary history of the country.
Capacity—Competent and trustworthy.
Instruction in Ordnance—Complete.
Instruction in Drill—Absolute.
Instruction in Mathematics—The military course.
Instruction in the Country's Geography—Complete, theoretically and practically.
Instruction in Statistics of the Country—Perfect.
Military Conduct—Irreproachable.
Civil Conduct—The same.
Health—Perfectly robust.

I, ROSALINO MARTINEZ, General of Brigade, Under Secretary of Naval and Military Affairs, do hereby certify that the service papers above, comprising six sheets, sealed with the seal of this office and signed by me, have been drawn up of General of Division Porfirio Diaz, from the documents existing with reference to him.

Mexico, 21st of November, 1904.

(Signed) R. MARTINEZ.

Audited by the Secretary of Naval and Military Affairs.

(Signed) J. F. MENA.

Confirmed by the Head of the Official Department, Mexico, 21st of November, 1904.

Colonel and Head of the Department.

(Signed) ANTONIO FLORIS.

CHAPTER V.

PUEBLA BESIEGED BY THE FRENCH.

THE War of Reform was over. Diaz was already a General.

1862 began an important era in Mexican history. Interest in the wealth and possibilities of the country began to be aroused by the outside world. The constant changes of government, the incessant warfare between opposing factions, the long drawn-out struggle with the Church, which had caused bloodshed and turmoil throughout the length and breadth of the land, had not passed unnoticed by other nations.

The ambitious dreamer of dreams—the conqueror of the European continent—was at his zenith. Marengo, Solferino, were victories that stirred like flame his soaring ambitions. There was Mexico—Mexico with its fable and romance, and its vast hoards of wealth. Napoleon dreamed of an added empire, an object lesson to two worlds of his far-reaching power. The confidential letter of instructions with which he sent out General Forey and the Expeditionary Army discloses part, at least, if not all, of the influences which moved this ambitious schemer :

" There will not be wanting some who will ask you why we have provided men and money to establish a regular government in Mexico. In the present state of civilisation of the world the prosperity of America is not indifferent to Europe, for she it is who feeds our manufactures and keeps our commerce alive. It is to our interest that the Republic of the United

States may be powerful and prosperous, but by no means that she should take all the Gulf of Mexico, and hence command the West Indies as well as South America, and be the sole dispenser of the products of the New World. . . . . Now, therefore, our military honour pledged, the exigencies of our politics and the interest of our industry and our commerce make it our duty to march on Mexico, to plant there boldly our standard, to establish a monarchy—if it is not incompatible with the national sentiment of the country—but at all events a government which possesses some stability."* This is dated July 3rd, 1862.

Occasion for interference was not far to seek. Mexican finances had fallen into a state of hopeless bankruptcy. Payment of the Government Bonds had for two years been suspended. The War of Reform and the period of guerilla warfare which followed had been responsible for great destruction of property.

England, France and Spain had made claims on behalf of their citizens in Mexico, and of the foreign bondholders. These claims were pressed upon President Juárez, who was at that time engaged in the herculean task of restoring order and suppressing the guerilla bands.

Juárez could only give promises. Diplomatic relations were broken off, and on October 31st, 1861, a Convention of these three Powers was signed in London, providing that they should jointly seize certain fortresses in Mexico, sequestrate the customs revenues at the ports, and form a Commission to arrange payment of the debts, each Power expressly repudiating any desire to acquire territory, or to interfere directly in the Government of Mexico.

France had, in fact, the least stake of any in the country. The foreign debt amounted in round numbers to $82,000,000 (Mexican). England, the chief creditor, held almost the entire issue, her bonds amounting to no less than $70,000,000. Spain came next with an indebtedness of $9,400,000, and the French debt reached only the insignificant sum of $2,600,000.

France, therefore, though she also advanced some other visionary claims, was a long way third in importance among the

* "The Fall of Maximilian's Empire," by Lieut. Seaton Schroeder, p. 3.

Allied Powers, whose united squadrons appeared off the harbour of Vera Cruz in January, 1862, to enforce their demands. But all this time Louis Napoleon was quietly and subtly nursing his idea of a feudatory kingdom in Mexico, and had already made secret overtures to Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, to place him on the throne.

To keep the door still open to diplomatic settlement, Juárez deemed it wise to make considerable concessions, and evacuated the port and castle of San Juan de Ulúa, near Vera Cruz, at the demand of the Allies. Preliminaries were signed at La Soledad, authorising the three Powers to land their forces and occupy certain inland towns with a view to insure the maintenance of order, an undertaking being given that should negotiations be broken off they would return to the coast.

France was not long in disclosing her hand. A Mexican politician of deservedly ill-odour, Don Juan Almonte, who had been an envoy of the Reactionaries to Europe, and had obtained the ear of Napoleon, arrived off Vera Cruz with some French reinforcements which Napoleon found pretext to land in Mexico. He brought a proposal to found an Empire under French tutelage. This at once obtained support from the French Agent. England and Spain, declaring that the action of the French was a violation of the Treaties of London and La Soledad, indignantly withdrew from the alliance, re-embarked their troops, and sailed away.

Mexico was thus left face to face with well-trained French invaders. A proclamation declaring a military dictatorship, with Almonte as supreme chief of the nation, was followed by a march of the French forces, now reorganised in two divisions, and numbering six thousand five hundred men, upon the capital.

Through some of the most magnificent scenery those French troops moved inland from Vera Cruz. Surely no views in the world can be grander. They tramped on foot over country and through wondrous cañons which I traversed recently on the engine of a train. The Himalayas are higher, it is true, than those extinct volcanoes of Orizaba, Colima, or Popocatepetl—the Alps are more numerous, the Andes perhaps more rugged;

but where else does one get such marvellous pictures ? Below, a tropical river with alligators and terrapin in the water ; parrots and monkeys over head, wild tangled jungle on the banks, bamboo, cocoanut, rubber, or plantain, then the more rugged rocky peaks, and towering away into that wonderful sky those great, snow-clad volcanoes.

Truly beautiful scenery is to be met with in Mexico. It is the land of extremes of every kind. As we descended lower on our engine—descended, in fact, 10,000 feet in a few hours—we left the pines and magueys and reached bananas sheltering coffee, likewise cotton and sugar ; adobe houses made from sunburnt bricks disappeared, and their places were taken by bamboo huts. The children ran about in nature's garb ; orchids and hanging mosses clung to the trees, and all was tropical again. What a magnificent view of the snow-capped volcano of Orizaba met our admiring gaze ! Even French soldiers intent on capture and on war must have been impressed by the marvellous panorama through which they passed.

Félix Diaz, the brother of the President of Mexico, was wounded by the first shot fired in the French campaign. His injury was not serious, however. With fifty mounted men he had been sent to keep observation on the detachments of French and Spanish troops, who, immediately the alliance broke up, began to retire towards the coast from Orizaba—the town which lies sheltered by the volcano of the same name. While thus engaged he was surprised and attacked by the French, and after some sharp skirmishing was made prisoner. General Diaz, who was in military command of the district, himself tells the story of his brother's escape :

" A few minutes after the encounter, the Countess of Reus, with a Spanish escort, passed by. Hearing what had happened, she besought the liberty of the prisoners, and was joined in her request by a Spanish officer who was chief of General Prim's Staff, whereupon Félix, taking advantage of a moment of carelessness among the French, rapidly mounted his own horse, which was still at his side, jumped the fence into the road, and

plunged into a wood, luckily without being struck by any of the shots that the French sent after him."

This was a bold action. Some French officers were sitting on old boxes at a little table, making out their plans of action, others were standing about discussing matters, while several unmounted French soldiers were near at hand. There were but few horses, one of which was Félix Diaz' own.

Waiting his opportunity while the French were at work, he strolled about among the empty cases and the one or two odd steeds, pretending to pat and admire them.

Then came the favourable moment.

Everybody was busy. Slipping his foot into the stirrup, he flung his leg over the saddle, and spurring his faithful beast, at one plunge they took an adjacent stone wall, and were galloping away for very life before the officers had time to draw their pistols, or the soldiers to take careful aim with their rifles.

"He arrived safely at Coscomatepec, where he had friends, and two days afterwards joined me in Acultzingo," says Diaz.

With this incident, which has something of the confusion of comedy about it, began the great national struggle which was only to end five years later with the tragic death of the Emperor Maximilian at Querétaro.

Enough has been said by French military writers on the Expedition to Mexico to show that they expected their march on the capital would be little more than a military promenade. They under-estimated the resistance of which the country was still capable, despite the ravages of the civil war from which it had just emerged. President Juárez ordered the brigades of General Diaz and General Mejía to make a front against the invaders, while he gathered forces in the interior. A terrible disaster met the Republicans at the outset. Mejía's command was practically annihilated by the explosion of a magazine. Diaz was left to bear the brunt of the fighting. He gave battle to the French on the heights of Acultzingo on April 28th, 1862. The engagement served its purpose in delaying

the advance, and affording General Zaragoza time to complete his preparations for the defence of Puebla, upon which the troops fell back at the close of the day.

A week later the French, under General Lorencez, attacked Puebla itself with all their forces. It was a glorious day for the Republicans, who still celebrate their victory of the "Cinco de Mayo" (May 5th, 1862), as one of their proudest anniversaries. The French met with a disastrous and humiliating defeat, though outnumbering by three to one the little band of two thousand men who held the town against them.

General Diaz fought as second in command under Zaragoza, and was entrusted with the defence of the road into Puebla from Amozoc, where the French encamped. During the battle the enemy repeatedly concentrated their forces upon this exposed position. Two concerted attacks, in which both sides fought with grim determination, were repulsed; the French finally broke, and Diaz found himself at the close of the engagement riding at the head of his troops in hot pursuit of their main body, which continued until nightfall. An officer who was with him on that important day described the scene to me.

"Diaz looked splendid. He always appeared much taller than he really was when in uniform, and in the saddle. His broad shoulders and fine round head gave him dignity. That day he was inwardly excited, though outwardly calm. That is a feature I have often noticed with our President; the more anxious or excited he gets the more calm he becomes. As a young man he had a strong temper, but so completely has he got that temper under control that I don't believe anyone has seen him lose it for many a year. To-day he is completely his own master."

This check warned Napoleon for the first time of the magnitude of the task he had taken in hand. Lorencez, in disgrace for his unexpected, and to his own countrymen unaccountable defeat, was superseded. A large expeditionary army was organised. When General Forey, who was sent out from France to take the command, arrived at Vera Cruz, he found himself at the head of a force which now numbered twenty-two thousand six

hundred men, and fifty guns. They could, in addition, depend on assistance from 7,500 auxiliaries—Mexicans who during the years of guerilla warfare had been fighting for their lives in the mountains, and were now ready to espouse any new cause under the leadership of the notorious Reactionary General Márquez, who had already shown himself a traitor.

In less than twelve months after their *débâcle* the French were again before Puebla, but under very different circumstances. The capture of the city and the recovery of his army's lost prestige was General Forey's first object. He brought up nearly thirty thousand men, and took charge in person of the operations. Against this crushing force the Republicans could place within the city only sixteen thousand men.

The defence was entrusted to General Ortega, under whom Porfirio Diaz held command of a brigade of infantry.

Puebla, which thus became the scene of one of the stiffest fights during the French invasion, is renowned for its situation and its beautiful buildings. It is called the "City of Angels," but the "City of Tiles" would be more appropriate. Ever since the days of the Spanish Conquest, Puebla has been famous for its tiles; but, alas! the art originally inspired by the Moors is fast dying out. The walls, floors and domes of many of the most beautiful old churches and convents are made of these tiles, and although soldiers did their best to deface them, and scraped the solid gilding off the splendid church carvings to melt it down, still much of beauty and charm remains in Puebla City.

Puebla State is one of the twenty-seven composing Mexico, and its chief town, which lies in a plain surrounded by mountains, has the same name. Eleven times have armies assembled before the gates of Puebla. Eleven times in the strange history of Mexico has Puebla played its part; but now all is quiet. In the modern town there are two or three dozen factories, sawmills, and foundries. The public squares are full of monuments, and the streets clean and well kept. The town stands 7,000 feet above the sea level, after the usual Mexican fashion. The Mexicans had no consideration for weak hearts when they planned their cities.

Cholula.

Popocatapetl, from the battlefield of Puebla.

[*Page* 88.

Photo by HON. HERBERT GIBBS.]

Cholula Pyramid, from half-way up the Great Teocalle.

[*Page* 89.

Not far from Puebla is the famous pyramid of Cholula, beside which the French camped. What did they think of it? Did they realise that it is larger than any pyramid in Egypt, and that here the Aztecs met the Spaniards in deadly combat? Cholula was to Mexico what Mecca is to the Mahommedans, or Jerusalem to Christians. It was the Holy City of Anahuac.

The pyramid of Cholula was raised by the Aztecs to the God of Air—Quetzalcoatl. He was a benevolent deity who walked among men, according to the Aztecs. He was said to be tall, white-skinned, with long dark hair and flowing beard. He had to flee from Mexico City because of the wrath of other gods. On his way to the sea he stopped at Cholula, where a temple was raised and dedicated to his worship. At the coast he entered a wizard skiff and sailed away, promising to return.

When the Spaniards came the Aztecs thought that among them was their own white man, and this did much to help the conquest of Mexico by a white race.

Cholula is still a place of pilgrimage. The vegetation is so thick that it scarcely looks like a pyramid; up the steep sides pilgrims toil on their knees. From the church at the top is a glorious panorama over the battlefields of Puebla. It is said that fifty-seven churches can be seen below in the surrounding valleys, and, indeed, domes and spires are everywhere. They are such beautiful tiled or gilded domes and such splendid towers, that really the churches of Mexico, even in the villages, excite astonishment.

The cathedral of Puebla, with its wonderful chapel of Santo Domingo, contains carvings which are still among the finest in Mexico, and when one says "Mexico," one means in the world, for in the matter of churches, carvings and gildings, Mexico contains exquisite workmanship. Much was destroyed in the days of warfare and revolution, especially at the time of the French invasion, but fortunately much still remains. The churches built by the Dominican monks are generally the finest in Puebla, as in Oaxaca. The Dominicans seem to have been particularly artistic as well as rich.

All accounts agree that the French suffered greatly from the

heat of the Mexican sun, for the fierceness of which they had come unprepared, and they did not realise until taught by experience that it was impossible to march in the daytime. It strikes a visitor to the country as curious that while the men—including gentlemen—all wear the enormous hat of the country, the sombrero, to protect them against sunstroke, the women go about unshielded. The better-class girls wear no head covering, and when they go out in the sun—which is seldom—they merely use a parasol. To avoid sunburn they powder tremendously—quite a white powder, which contrasts strangely with their dark skins. The elder ladies wear lace mantillas, or thin black scarves, over their hair. These, though charming—especially the former—afford no protection whatever from the sun. The poorer women, although obliged to be out in the sun's heat, never wear a hat; they just put their blue shawls (rebozo) over their heads, and walk about at the hottest time of the day with no further protection. Sunstroke, strange to say, is almost unknown among the natives, although foreigners suffer badly, and many of the Frenchmen lost their lives from it.

It was on March 18th, 1863, that the scouts of the Eastern army in Puebla observed the approach of the French in two compact columns. They separated at the road to Amozoc and marched in different directions, with the object of encircling the city. Diaz had suggested to the General in command an attack while the movement was in progress, but his advice was not acted upon, and the circle was completed on the following morning, when the heads of the converging columns met at the hill of San Juan. Next day some of the French siege batteries were brought up.

Just as the first gun-fire announced the opening of the siege there occurred an incident which showed how deeply Mexican patriotism had been stirred. Colonel Don Manuel González presented himself before General Diaz.

González, a Mexican of great ability and distinction, who afterwards rose to be President of the Republic when Diaz, after his first term, refused re-election, had devoted his life and fortunes to the Conservative party. The two men had been

opposed in the bloody strife around Oaxaca, in which González had fought against Diaz with exemplary courage. Saluting his old opponent González said :

" I have asked you at various times to help me to obtain a place in the ranks of the Mexican army as colonel. You have refused to help me in this, or the Government has refused to permit you to help me. To-day is no time for solicitations. A common enemy is here to attack the town, and I come to ask you a very different thing—a place in your ranks and a gun. Remember that I, like yourself, am a Mexican, and I claim the honour of dying for my country."

Diaz was greatly moved, and shaking his newly-found comrade by the hand, he declared that González should be at his side as a friend and companion, and promised to make his presence known to General Ortega, so that he could be formally enrolled in the National Army. An opportunity was soon at hand.

" While the French," writes Diaz, " were gradually contracting the circle of the forces besieging the city, I proposed one day to the General-in-Chief to attack an isolated position a little apart from the neighbouring posts. The suggestion was accepted, and the assault was carried out in the presence of the General and his Chief-of-Staff, who watched the operations from the Guadalupe Hill. I placed a company under the orders of González, who performed the work entrusted to him with such skill and success that on my return the General asked me who had led those men.

" I took the opportunity of presenting González to him. Then directing him to withdraw, I related to the General the way in which he had come to me. General Ortega thereupon ordered that González should receive a commission as full colonel, and in this capacity he remained at my service."

Others of the Reactionary leaders afterwards followed González' example, showing devotion to their country by joining the Liberal forces against the French invaders.

The Mexicans fought with the stubbornness and tenacity they

have always shown. In the first days of the investment, part of the San Javier fort was destroyed by cannon fire, and an attack was made in force; but though the French reached the moat they met with such a hot reception that they were compelled to withdraw. The concentrated artillery fire, however, soon reduced the fort, at no time of any great strength, to ruins, and consequently the stores which it contained were withdrawn to the heart of the city. The battalions of the States of Guanajuato and Morella, which were left to hold the San Javier Hill, were one day overwhelmed by the French, who advanced against them in four columns. In this engagement the Mexicans lost three guns and five hundred men killed and wounded.

After this disaster the bull-ring and its surroundings behind the cathedral of San Javier were defended. The bull-ring is a prominent feature in every Mexican town of importance, and is the chief amusement of the populace on Sunday.

In the first days of April street fighting began. In this form of warfare we have the testimony of the French themselves that the Mexicans were hard fighters. An officer of General Forey's staff, Captain Niox, who has written a book on the "Expédition du Mexique," says of them: "When a building was ruined they defended the ruins. Then they occupied another position behind, and defended that in the same way. Consequently, every step we took was by overturned walls brought down by gun-fire, and littered with the corpses of besiegers and besieged."

Diaz was in the thick of all this. For two days he held a weak line of defence against an attacking force greatly outnumbering his own, and after some desperate hand-to-hand fighting compelled them to retire discomfited. Some passages picked out at random from his diary are lively reading:

"On the night of April 1st I received orders to remove my brigade from the square of San José, to hand over that post to the reserves, and to guard the front of the town facing the enemy from south to north. The line of buildings commenced on the south with the Convent of San Agustin, thence lay in a northerly direction to the Hospice, and ended at La Merced.

"Collecting my troops, I spent all the night inspecting the houses and passages giving communication from one to another. I pulled down walls where necessary to gain a clear zone of fire. Fortunately the French did not attack during all the next day, and I profited by the respite to further strengthen the defences."

The weak point was the Hospice. It had already been seized by the French before Diaz arrived, the force which had held the place under Escobedo, and which Diaz relieved, having withdrawn without waiting for him to come up. His orders were not to dispute possession at that time, but to occupy all the adjacent houses which could be advantageously defended.

"At six o'clock in the morning I began to realise that the enemy were undermining us. At first the sounds seemed to me distinctly subterranean, and their direction from the Hospice towards San Agustin, in front of the house known as the barracks of San Marcos. I was, however, mistaken, and finally came to the conclusion that the Hospice walls were being bored in order to make a breach for cannon, through which the men could fire into the barrack-room of San Marcos. Acting upon this idea I occupied this building, strengthened where possible the defences facing the Hospice, and collected troops to fire from the parapets.

"The attack was not long delayed. At eight, cannon-fire destroyed the front of a shop on the right of the porch, but the roof, being very solid and stoutly built, did not fall in, as doubtless the French had expected it would.

"A petard was then exploded at the door of the porch. Fortunately, I had strengthened this within by a heavy backing of tiles and bricks obtained from the courtyard and the porch itself, and behind these a wall of earth. Owing to this the petard did not break down the door, and the French had to attack through the open breach at the adjoining shop.

"Their sallies were energetically repulsed for more than two hours.

"There was one perilous moment when the impetuous rush of the French through the breach discouraged my soldiers, who began

to break away in disorder, but in the narrow exit they became jammed. At this moment I ran forward and discharged a gun posted above the porch among the French, and its effect at close quarters so demoralised them that they left the courtyard which they had begun to enter, and beat a hasty retreat.

"This revived the spirits of my men. Many returned to their posts, and from the shelter of a fountain in the middle of the courtyard directed a quick fire on the breach. I had made a pretty large excavation in getting out material for backing up the door. This now served admirably as cover for my assailants. I therefore ordered a lieutenant with fifty men to go up to the second floor of the building, and fire down on the soldiers thus sheltered. Their fire was so efficacious that the French made no further show of resistance, and returned to their positions.

"All was over at the barracks of San Marcos at half-past ten at night, after fourteen and a half hours' continuous fighting. Once the enemy had withdrawn I advanced with a sufficient force to close the breach that their artillery had opened, and to restore our defences. This cost me several men, for it was carried on under the enemy's fire; but at last the work was completed."

Next day Diaz was again attacked. First, however, the French gave their attention to another part of his line of defence. The tactics were the same. A breach in the outer wall was opened with artillery. Then a column charged in and occupied the first court of a house, and a sanguinary encounter took place for possession of the inner court. Diaz is found at every point of danger.

Here is an incident quoted from his diary, which proves how indefatigable he was:

"When I arrived at the point of attack a wide breach had been opened in the wall, as wide as a street. Nevertheless, the French could not enter because they had no artillery supports. During the cannonade the walls of the house from which they had fired had partly fallen in, and covered the guns with the débris. This being the position, I ordered Colonel González to sally into the street with his men, and endeavour to seize the battery.

The task proved impossible under the close fire to which they were subjected, which was steady, accurate, and rapid. We had to abandon the attempt, but later were able, without danger, to fill up our own breach.

"In the night we burnt the demolished house. Some of the cannon which had remained ready-charged for firing went off when the flames reached them. We could recover none of the guns. Colonel González, to my great regret, was wounded at the end of the day."

Night and day, while the house-to-house fighting continued, the weary soldiers were given little rest. Hardly had the combats just recounted ended, when two bands of Zouaves charged through the ill-defended breach of San Marcos, which had been patched up the night before. The passage through the porch was difficult and was defended from the court, so the Zouaves collected in the ruined shop at the side; but the roof had been carefully prepared for their reception! Four grenades were exploded among them, so shaking the place that they must have expected the roof and walls yet standing to have fallen. When the smoke and dust cleared it was found that the Zouaves had retired to their former positions, leaving their dead and wounded.

It is always interesting to know the other side of every story. Fortunately there is a French account available of these first two days' attack on the lines defended by Diaz with so much personal courage and military skill. Captain Niox, the French officer before alluded to, differs in no essential detail from Diaz in his narrative of events, which concludes:

"The Commander-in-Chief went himself to the barracks of San Marcos to examine the obstacles against which our troops had fought in vain. He saw all the barricades which had been raised and were defended by artillery; the fortified walls, the flat roofs strengthened with bags of earth, balconies and apartments sheltering riflemen, who remained perfectly concealed. He could thus personally convince himself of the difficulties presented by these attacks, in which our most valiant soldiers

perished, because these, being always the men who go at the head of a column, naturally fall first. It was then ordered that mining works should be begun."

On the 5th of April, a renewed attempt was made to open the breaches at San Marcos, and the following day there was a further attack, which was again repulsed. Diaz had on this occasion the satisfaction of taking prisoners Captain Galland and thirty-five men who were cut off in the courtyard when the French retreat began, and who, realising their hopeless plight, surrendered.

Meanwhile, sapping was going on, and was advancing every day. Provisions were growing scarce in the beleaguered city. General Tomas O'Horán broke out of Puebla, and made his way through the French lines in order to inform the Government of the critical state of affairs.

Perhaps the most bloody fighting of all was that which attended the attack and defence of the Convent of Santa Inés. Diaz himself regards this as one of the most notable episodes in the defence of Puebla. It was for his services in this engagement that he received his final step in promotion. The assault came from a dwelling known as the Mesón de la Reja, which the French had taken a few days previously. Opposite was the garden of San Agustin, and a low wall, then held by the Mexicans, came out to the street along which the assaulting columns must pass. Behind the wall were built a series of low rooms, the flat roofs of which were open to fire from the balconies of the Mesón de la Reja.

The French columns stormed the position with the greatest bravery, though exposed to a murderous fire from barricades which had been hastily thrown across the street on their front, and from balconies at the side. Despite heavy losses they re-formed and charged again and again, every yard of their advance being marked by dead and wounded men. At one moment it seemed that the fortunes of the day would be theirs. The stubborn Mexican resistance was being worn out, and the French vanguard, detached from their supports, had already reached the convent, and entered.

One position of vantage open to the Mexicans they had not yet occupied, namely, the roofs of the low rooms level with the garden wall of San Agustin, and overlooking the street in which the conflict was raging. It was a perilous place to hold, the roofs being open and exposed to direct fire from the higher balconies of the Mesón de la Reja.

The occasion called for desperate methods. Diaz, gathering some volunteers around him, led them through a door at the rear and up the few steps which gave access to the roofs. Immediately on their appearance a heavy rifle fire was directed towards them, in face of which they dashed across the roofs to the street front, and found what little shelter they could by lying prone behind a low cornice and the corner structure. Here they were able to reinforce the Mexican fire, which was being poured with deadly effect into the assailing columns.

Finally the French were checked, wavered, and retired, leaving prisoners in the hands of the Mexicans the survivors—numbering seven officers and one hundred and thirty men—of the 1st Zouaves, that plucky band who had fought their way to the Convent of Santa Inés, and at the last had found retreat impossible.

"Hundreds of corpses of French soldiers," says Diaz, "and among them those of many officers, littered the streets and courtyards of Puebla where the fighting had been hottest.

"On the following day General Ortega gave several promotions to officers who had taken part in the fight. For myself I was made General-of-Brigade in the permanent army, and the nomination was afterwards confirmed by the Federal Government."

This was on April 5th, five weeks after the investment had begun. The horrors of the siege were not yet at an end. That night, and again on the 29th, by consent of both parties, firing was suspended for two hours to enable the dead and wounded to be removed from the streets and the ruins—an indispensable step in Mexico in those burning hot days.

Difficulties of provisioning the town finally sealed the fate of Puebla. It maintained the defence gallantly, hoping for succour

from without, but twice mule convoys entrusted to General O'Horán failed to get through the French lines. Comonfort, the Ex-President, who in the hour of his country's need had returned to Mexico from exile, and was given a military command, was completely defeated when attempting the relief of the town, with a loss of some thousand prisoners and eight guns. He withdrew with the remnant of his force to Mexico City.

A young officer who served under Comonfort, and now holds an important post in Europe, speaks of him in eulogistic terms :

" He was gallant and a perfect gentleman, exceedingly talented, and an excellent friend.

" Comonfort's death was very tragic. At the time when the French occupied the capital and many Mexicans had retired to Laon, General Comonfort was ordered to Celaya, and General Uraga to San Luis Potosí. Their start was made at an early hour in the morning, and the two carriages drew up in front of the same house, as the generals were lodging together. As they were leaving General Uraga proposed to exchange escorts, as he wished to take the Rancheros squadron with him.

" The following day, when Comonfort was about to finish his journey to Celaya, the *jefe politico* of San Miguel de Alende told him he was furnishing him with an escort of the inhabitants, as that part of the road was infested with bandits, under the captaincy of the famous and dreaded brothers Troncoso, who were bold enough to attack even regular troops. He started with about fifty Rancheros, all well mounted, and they proceeded quietly on their way towards Celaya. These brothers Troncoso were dreaded throughout El Balgio, and finding General Comonfort was only attended by fifty men, some five hundred bandits opened fire upon them, and a terrible encounter ensued.

" Unfortunately the Rancheros, with their leader, fled, leaving Comonfort alone ; he fought gallantly against great odds for some minutes, but was overpowered and killed close to his own carriage by lance thrusts.

" His death was greatly regretted in Mexico, and, indeed, it was a misfortune to the country, for he was a brave soldier and a patriot."

With Comonfort's abortive effort to relieve Puebla the last hope of the garrison expired. General Ortega destroyed his artillery and ammunition, and on May 17th informed the French commander that the town lay in the power of the besiegers, to enter at will. Forey, with all the enthusiasm of a soldier-diplomat, was anxious to conciliate the future subjects of the Empire which it was his mission to establish. He offered to allow all the civil and military leaders to remain in Puebla on parole, if they would promise to enter no more into the politics or warfare of Mexico. The parole was not accepted by a single officer. A reply was sent by them declaring that their deep convictions forbade consideration of such a proposal.

Diaz made his escape the night before the melancholy little cavalcade of prisoners of war set out for Vera Cruz. He had seen his comrades in arms marshalled on the road to march on foot, and was himself to have been escorted thither with General Ortega and the officers of the Staff next morning. Over night he managed to change his uniform, and wrapped himself in a blanket. This large shawl, worn by every native in cold weather, attracted no particular notice, as the night was very cold. Avoiding the sentinel, who might, he feared, suspect his identity, he walked towards the French officer on guard, whom he found to be Captain Galland. This officer had at the beginning of the siege been his own prisoner, and they had become rather friendly. With a simple salute and a turn of the head to avoid recognition he passed, and reached the street. Some suspicion must, however, have been aroused, for soon afterwards he was searched for among his companions, and his escape discovered.

Diaz found some difficulty in getting away, as all the streets were guarded. Fortunately, he met a friend who took him to his house, where General Berriozábal was also being concealed. An opportunity was found, with the assistance of an officer who had surrendered to the French, to smuggle them out of the town. All night they wandered in the mountains, and when morning broke, utterly lost, they found themselves back before Puebla, and heard the *réveillé* of the French guards. They then went

on to the city of San Miguel Canoa, and presented themselves as deserters. Knowing that the parish priest was a friend of their deliverer, they asked him for a guide to Tlaxcala. Later they discovered they were being pursued, but finding a small Mexican cavalry force at Apam, they were able to evade capture, and after some adventurous days safely arrived at the capital.

The fall of Puebla sealed the fate of Mexico City, and altered the whole course of the war. It was impossible for the Republicans to hold the capital against the French with the forces that remained at their disposal. Many of their best troops had been taken prisoners. Confidence in the power of Mexico to resist the invader had received a severe blow. There was grave reason to suspect the loyalty of many of the men who still fought under the Constitutional flag. Diaz met Juárez immediately after his arrival in the city; the position was discussed, and it became evident that some considerable time must pass before those who were struggling for the independence of Mexico could again take the risk of a pitched battle.

A week after Puebla surrendered Juárez moved the seat of the Constitutional Government farther north to San Luis Potosí. It had been his earnest desire that Diaz should take supreme military command in the war. Diaz refused, on the ground that the appointment of so young an officer as himself would create further dissensions, and encourage some half-hearted leaders to abandon the cause at a time when Mexico stood in need of every man. He accepted command, however, as General-in-Chief of the Army of the East, with responsibility for defending the group of Eastern States against the invaders, and after a long and most difficult march, keeping in the mountains and manœuvring to avoid the French, quelling mutiny among his disaffected soldiers, and overcoming most serious obstacles, arrived at last at Oaxaca.

General Forey led his troops into Mexico City unopposed on June 9th, 1863. Thus early the French had driven a wedge into the country from the coast, occupying the central plateau, with their enemy pushed up into the mountainous districts of the north and south-east. The capital—or, at least, those

Mexican domes.

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Photo by WAITE.

The Emperor Maximilian, from a painting in the Museum, Mexico City.

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renegade Mexicans who remained in it—welcomed the victors of Puebla with some show of enthusiasm.

Everything at that moment promised well for Napoleon. The plot to overthrow the national institutions of Mexico had succeeded. A tripartite regency was declared, with General Almonte, a traitor to his country, at its head. All could now go forward in orderly sequence.

It was thought well by the new masters in Mexico, who were gifted in the arts of stage-craft, that everything should be done in dramatic form. So one morning in July the curtain was lifted, and an astonished world was permitted to see an Assembly of Notables—of whose existence it had never heard before—sitting in conclave in Mexico City, and solemnly affirming the following propositions :

First : The Mexican nation adopts a Monarchical, Temperate, and Hereditary form of Government, under a Catholic Prince.

Second : The Sovereign shall take the title of Emperor of Mexico.

Third : The Imperial Crown of Mexico shall be offered to His Imperial and Royal Highness the Prince Ferdinand Maximilian of Austria, for him and his descendants.

Fourth : In case, from circumstances which cannot be foreseen, the Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian should not take possession of the Throne which is offered to him, the Mexican nation shall place it under the consideration of His Majesty Napoleon III., Emperor of the French, that he may indicate another Catholic Prince to whom the Crown shall be offered.

In this form the deluded Maximilian received his invitation to the country. It ought to have deceived no one. Some there were, no doubt, more especially among the old Spanish families, to whom the restoration of a monarchy, with its revival of old traditions and accompaniment of a brilliant Court, offered a fair promise of releasing Mexico from the toils in which she had become hopelessly involved ; but this so-called " Assembly of Notables," who thus arrogated to themselves the right to barter away the liberties of the country, was in no way representa-

tive of the Mexican nation. They were the mere mouthpieces of Louis Napoleon, and subservient to his will.

For good or ill the die was cast—and ill, indeed, it proved for the chief actors in the sad drama which was about to be unfolded. A deputation hurried off to lay the Crown at Maximilian's feet, and a new chapter in Mexico's troubled history was opened.

CHAPTER VI.

MAXIMILIAN'S OVERTURES TO DIAZ.

FIERCE raged the controversy in Europe over the Maximilian episode in Mexico. There was about it a glamour of romance lacking in the history of most modern thrones. That the Austrian Prince with his beautiful wife should sail away to rule an almost unknown land, notorious for bloodshed and brigandage, aroused every one's sympathy.

Napoleon, too—now but a tattered, empty memory—was a commanding personality in Europe in those days; the man of destiny, the working of whose mind none had been able to fathom.

What did it all portend? The novelty of the enterprise, the high station of the chief actors in the drama, and the conflict which it threatened between the monarchical institutions of the Old World and the Republicanism of the New, all added to the interest with which people in Europe watched the course of events.

Unfortunately, although it has been my good luck to meet in Mexico so many people who had to do with the overthrow of Maximilian and his death, I know nothing personally of the intense excitement the whole story caused in Europe at the time. Those of an older generation have told me how they rushed wildly to the papers every morning to see what was happening; for in those days telegraphic communication was almost nil, and news took long to filter through to Europe.

It was a terrible chapter in history, a terse chapter of buoyant hopes, treachery, desertion, and death. Luckily I

am able to give in General Diaz' own words the part he himself played in those three remarkable years.

Maximilian was the younger brother of the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, who, since his father's abdication in 1848, has ruled his divided kingdoms for more than half a century, chiefly by the strength of his own personality and the affection in which he is held by all his subjects. Born in 1832, Maximilian was by two years the junior of the present Emperor. The brothers grew up together. As a lad of fourteen Maximilian entered the Austrian Navy, and afterwards became a Rear-Admiral and its Commander-in-Chief.

He was an exceptionally handsome man. Although gracious and genial in manner, he was somewhat reserved. Proud of his descent from the rulers of Imperial Rome, he held stoutly to the doctrine of the divine right of kings. At the age of twenty-five he married Princess Charlotte Amélie (Carlota), only daughter of Leopold, late King of the Belgians, a sister of the now reigning monarch.

Her influence upon Maximilian's somewhat weak nature remained paramount to the end. She was but seventeen at the time of their union, and was widowed at twenty-seven.

After Maximilian's wedding he was appointed by his brother Viceroy of Lombardy, and established at Milan a Court which was celebrated for its magnificence. Here the young Archduchess, who loved power and display before everything, reigned supreme. All seemed happy and prosperous; but the expense of this splendour brought down the condemnation of the Austrian Government. Maximilian resigned, after only two years' enjoyment of his vice-regal powers, and with his wife retired to the Castle of Miramar, on the Adriatic, where they had built a beautiful palace. In this seclusion Maximilian was perfectly happy, enjoying his lovely home and the society of his much loved wife. But, alas! she soon became weary of monotony, and when Napoleon III. offered the crown of Mexico to her husband she begged him to accept it.

It is well known that he at first refused the tempting bait. That he had any real enthusiasm for the task in which he finally

permitted himself to be engaged is doubtful. A sense of impending tragedy seems to have come over him during the interval before he sailed. In rough memoirs which he kept, and which were published after his death by order of the Emperor Francis Joseph, he wrote on the eve of his departure for Mexico :

" Must I separate myself for ever from my beautiful country ? You wish me to quit my gilded cradle, and sever the sacred ties which bind me to the fatherland—the land in which the sunniest years of my childhood have been passed, where I experienced the exquisite feelings of early love. Must I leave it for shadows and mere ambition ? You entice me with the allurements of a crown and dazzle me with foolish chimeras. Ought I to lend an ear to the sweet song of sirens ? You speak to me of a sceptre, a palace, and of power ; you place before me a boundless future. Must I follow you to distant shores beyond the vast ocean ? You wish the woof of my life should be entwined with gold and diamonds. But are you able to give me peace of mind ? And do riches confer happiness in your eyes ? Oh ! rather let me follow my tranquil life unobserved along the myrtle-shaded wayside. The study of science and cultivation of the muse are more delightful to me than the glare of gold and diamonds."

These pages are interesting reading. They show Maximilian to have been a highly cultivated, enthusiastic traveller, keenly alive to the beauties and wonders of Nature, well-read, and always a courteous, charming gentleman, whether the occasion upon which he jots down his memories be a visit to a royal palace or wild hours spent in roughing it in the primeval forest.

The Emperor Francis Joseph, aware of the difficulties and dangers that would surround the Mexican sovereignty, strongly opposed his brother's acceptance of the throne. Their mother, the Archduchess Sophie, supported Francis Joseph's plea, fearful of failure in her younger son's attempt to rule over this " barbarous people." Carlota had no misgivings. Visions of a Court wherein she would be the reigning Queen, ruling a splendid race, restoring to an ancient Church the wealth of which it had

been plundered—in short, the Sovereign lady of the land—determined her to throw the whole weight of her influence to secure her husband's acceptance of Napoleon's offer.

Maximilian still hesitated. No doubt the romantic traditions associated with Mexico and the ancient Empire of the Aztecs which he found himself called upon to revive, had weight with a man of his peculiar temperament; a dreamer rather than a political thinker. He did not realise how unstable was Napoleon's support, nor how wily were his plans. Then, too, there was his wife's unrestrained enthusiasm. Finally, still not without misgiving, he decided to take the crown, but only on the condition that it was offered to him by the unanimous vote of the Mexican people.

His chivalrous nature is shown in imposing such a condition, but it does more credit to his heart than to his head. What means had Mexico, held in subjection by forty thousand French bayonets, to record its unanimous will concerning Napoleon's nominee for its throne?

General Forey, his task accomplished, had been promoted Marshal of France for his services, and recalled to Europe. General Bazaine had been sent out by Napoleon as Generalissimo of the Army of Intervention, and while Maximilian hesitated, was clamouring for his arrival. A conscientious trifle of this kind was no obstacle to that rough soldier of fortune. The Mexican States entirely under French domination voted as one man, and Bazaine took care that any malcontents should not be heard.

Maximilian accepted the plébiscite as the will of the nation, resigned his rights to the Austrian Throne if his brother died without an heir, and was solemnly crowned Emperor in the Castle of Miramar by members of the Mexican Assembly of Notables sent to Europe for that purpose. He took an oath that he would "by every means in his power procure the well-being and prosperity of the Mexican nation, defend its independence, and preserve the integrity of its territory." The same day was executed a document, already arranged between Napoleon III. and the newly-crowned Emperor, by which the Empire about to be raised on foundations of national bankruptcy was at its birth

to be encumbered with the cost of the French intervention and other claims, constituting an additional public debt of one hundred and seventy-three million dollars.

Delighted with the joy and happiness of Carlota, the Emperor Maximilian embarked for his new kingdom on April 14th, 1864, after having paid a round of farewell visits to the Courts of England, France, Austria, Belgium, and the Vatican.

Judging from the accounts of people who knew Maximilian intimately, he was the last man who should have accepted such a throne. It needed a Louis XI. or a Cromwell, a ruler of iron nerve and will—perhaps not troubled with over many scruples—one who would unflinchingly pursue his set purpose, to govern Mexico with success, if success were possible. Instead, here was a man weak, vacillating, hypersensitive. Maximilian's temperament was romantic and artistic rather than practical, and above all, gentle and refined. He arrived in a country literally a seething cauldron of insurrection ; he did not even speak the tongue of the people ; he knew nothing of their history, their wants, their aims, or their capabilities.

The task before him was herculean, and he had not strength to combat it even in a small degree. No man has ever successfully ruled a people supported by foreign money, and by troops of any other country than his own. Maximilian tried the impossible, and he failed, but through it all showed himself the courteous, amiable, kindly gentleman. That Carlota was charming every one who knew her maintains, and there are many in Mexico to-day who speak with tears in their eyes of this unhappy, unlucky pair.

Admiral Eardley Wilmot tells me he well remembers the deep impression they made on him as a young man. He was on the *Duncan*, Admiral Sir James Hope's flagship, at Port Royal, Jamaica, when on May 21, 1864, the Austrian frigate *Moara* arrived there, carrying the Mexican flag at the main, and having on board Maximilian and Carlota and a numerous suite, on their way to Mexico. A French man-of-war acted as escort. Young Eardley Wilmot was sent to help secure the ship alongside the wharf, and while so employed Maximilian and his wife

landed on the jetty. "I remember thinking what a remarkably handsome pair they were, and both seemed in the highest spirits," he said.

Eight years later, when Eardley Wilmot, then a lieutenant, wrote in his diary (January, 1872), foreign rule in Mexico had been extinguished in the tragedy of Querétaro. This is the picture he gives of the then condition of the country:

"There is no security for life and property, so that the risk of losing either requires an enormous percentage of gain to counterbalance the unpleasantness of living in such a country.

"But though this may retard in some measure the advancement of Mexico, the main cause is to be found in the character of the people themselves, who have no stability of purpose and are prone to change. From their ancestors of Spain they have inherited uncertainty; their Indian blood brings them cunning; and the mixture produces treachery. He would be a bold man who would predict the future of Mexico. A great deal of talking and writing is being done about the possibility of Mexico having to receive a Protectorate from the United States, with a final view to annexation, while many Americans openly advocate military invasion and forcible possession. The Mexicans, however, scout the idea, and assert that in such emergency they would quickly cease their internal warfare and become a united host to repel the invaders. If any prominent man in Mexico would dare even to suggest a Protectorate his head would not long remain on his shoulders. The Mexicans do not think it a very serious thing to have ten or twenty revolutions on hand; but for a foreign nation to interfere in putting them down, or act as mediator to save the nation's life, is to them a terribly serious aspect of affairs. That was conclusively shown in the tragic episode of poor Maximilian's brief career.

"Retribution, however, may come upon the perpetrators of that deed, not from any foreign source, but their own inability to preserve unity and concord amongst themselves. The two principal actors in that dark tragedy, which sent an indignant thrill throughout the whole of Europe, have now

quarrelled, and Juárez, who has been President ever since, finds it necessary to employ all his energies to defeat the attempts of his old general, Porfirio Diaz, who has raised the standard of revolution against him and aims at chief power. But, although the present supreme government of Mexico is seriously threatened by a powerful revolutionary element, well-armed and equipped, it is generally believed by foreigners that Juárez will be equal to the emergency.

"The revolutionists up to this time have robbed, plundered, and murdered along their tracks. The merchants, business men, and capitalists of the country have no faith in Diaz as the head of the nation, though they admit his successes in the past as a brilliant and able general. . . . . But there is no doubt that the Church party in Mexico is the party of wealth and culture. It has but little sympathy with Juárez, and less with Diaz. The Juáristas are Liberals, but the Diaz men are extreme Radicals. Both are determined that the Church party must be kept down."

These remarks by Eardley Wilmot were strangely correct, because there was difficulty at that time of procuring real information about Mexico even on its own coast. His words show that although the people with whom he talked believed in Diaz as a soldier, they had no desire to see him in power, doubting his ability as a ruler. Yet these scoffers are the very people who now most warmly support the Government of President Diaz,

Maximilian was thirty-two years of age, and his wife much younger, when they started out with high hopes to conquer a new world and mount an Imperial throne. Little could they have realised the entire hopelessness of the task they had undertaken. Pomp and splendour was their aim—a Court and a Crown—but, alas! only three years later the heartbroken Empress returned to Europe, alone, to beg for mercy and help, and her husband was shot as an enemy of the country for which he had suffered so much in his ill-judged and ill-advised attempt to rule. The sad records of the Imperial House of Hapsburg, filled as they are with many sorrows, contain nothing more tragic than the story of the death of this young Prince, and of

the pathetic, long-drawn-out years of immurement of his heart-broken, demented widow.

They received but a cold greeting from the trading port when they landed at Vera Cruz, on May 29, 1864, and their tedious journey to Mexico City must have sadly depressed their spirits. The capital, however, awoke to enthusiasm. A section of the better-class, well-to-do residents, harassed by endless civil wars, and despairing of seeing a stable Government of their own established in Mexico, hailed Maximilian as a deliverer whom they hoped would bring peace and prosperity to their distracted country. The Imperial pair were crowned with great ceremony in the Cathedral of the capital.

Legend dies hard, and the Indians who had formerly welcomed the Spanish Conqueror Cortéz as the white man from the East, who, in the form of Quetzalcoatl, the God of Air, was to deliver them from their oppressed condition, now greeted with joyful hearts the Austrian Maximilian. The manner of his appearance and the fact that in his journey from the coast he had travelled westwards of the pyramid of Cholula, firmly convinced them in a superstitious belief that he was really the man chosen for the fulfilment of their ancient prophecy.

As the year in which Maximilian mounted the throne was drawing to its close the struggle for national independence seemed to have reached its darkest hour. Foreign troops had been steadily pouring into the country, and as the effective occupation of the interior was extended the Republican forces fell back, diminished in numbers and yet further scattered. It was less to the desperate men fighting for their cause in the mountains than to the attractions of the capital that light-hearted Mexicans turned.

Maximilian and Carlota surrounded themselves with a Court of Western magnificence. The Clericals were gratified by a decree reconstituting the Roman Catholic Church as the established faith. Their hopes of seeing restored the property sequestrated by the "Ley Juárez" had not yet been shattered. The Conservatives obtained office and power in the train of the Emperor. Liberals who deserted their cause found themselves

Photo by HON. HERBERT GIBBS.]

From the top of the Great Pyramid of Cholula. Stone cross dated 1662.

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A blind beggar.

[*Page* 111.

marked for special favour. An active Imperialist party, sincere and full of enthusiasm, sprang up, captivated in no small measure by the personal charms of the new monarch and his lovely and accomplished wife.

Those early months of sovereignty in Mexico City, before troubles began to grow thick upon them, were amongst the happiest in the shadowed lives of Maximilian and Carlota. There was then a time when the Empire, in spite of the difficulty and peril which the task promised, had a good chance for a bright future. It was an unexpected hour for Mexico; but neither the Prince nor his subjects knew how to take advantage of it.

Juárez, away in the mountains, could bide his time. A man of cool judgment and inflexible will, inured from his earliest days to a hard life of struggle against difficulty and apparent disaster, he foresaw more clearly than the hapless Maximilian the difficulties which must beset the Emperor's attempts to maintain himself in the country, with the Clerical Party scheming to keep its hold upon the Government and to rule. The Mexican Empire—to Maximilian the task of a life-time—was to Napoleon but a passing episode. Its pivot and base was the French Army. The episode would have its end.

Warned of his danger at San Luis Potosí by the advance of General Forey, Juárez had moved the seat of the Constitutional Government still farther north to Saltillo; and later, under similar pressure, again transferred it to Monterrey—the Mexican Chicago of to-day. He continued, in face of the monarchy, to assert his claim to be President of the Republic. As such he was still recognised by the United States, which consistently refused to pay any attention to the notifications of the "Empire of Mexico."

But to go back a few months and return to Diaz, who, meantime, has been lost sight of during his long march from the north to the Eastern States, which terminated with his arrival at Oaxaca at the close of November, 1863. The fortune of the cause in the South and East depended upon his preserving intact, as far as possible, the little body of troops

which still remained faithful to the Republican flag. This hazardous march, without proper transport or supplies, avoiding conflict with some 30,000 of the Imperial troops who were posted in and around Toluca, Mexico City and Puebla, and were anxious to intercept him, will certainly take rank among his important military achievements. With characteristic thoroughness he at once set himself the task of creating a new army for the defence of the Eastern States around the nucleus of veterans he had brought with him. A few weeks later he was able to send out a column which defeated the Imperialist Mexicans at Ixtapa — afterwards besieging them in San Cristóbal, and capturing that place.

This victory helped to consolidate his position.

A secret march and daring attempt to surprise and capture a French battalion near San Antonio Nanahuatipan, where a large force was concentrating, ended somewhat disastrously. The French were taken unprepared when bathing in the river, and many fell at the first volleys. It took little time, however, for them to recover their arms, which were piled on the banks, and organise a vigorous defence. The Republicans fell back on the church as a place of refuge, leaving on the field many dead, and most of their clothes and knapsacks, for they fought without time to dress. Reinforcements which Diaz had sent for found it impossible to come up in time, and he was obliged to retire with losses which considerably weakened his small force.

In the North events were happening calculated still further to break the heart of the Mexican resistance. The desertion from the Liberal ranks of leaders formerly so highly trusted as General Uraga and General Vidaurri, did much to weaken the Republican cause. When a further advance was made against the fugitive government, already pushed back into the mountains at Monterrey, it could count on no more than four thousand soldiers for its defence. González Ortega, with fifteen hundred men, had overtaken a force marching to reinforce the President, when the combined columns were attacked by the French and defeated. The Mexicans drew off from the field in fair order. In the night, however, the soldiers, sore at their defeat and

having been without food for two days, disbanded, scattered, and were seen no more.

This was the position in the autumn of the year 1864. Next to Juárez himself, there was no man in the country whose influence, could it have been won over to Maximilian's side, would have given such powerful support to the Empire as that of Porfirio Diaz. In this crisis in the fortunes of the Republican cause the moment seemed opportune for opening negotiations, and the Emperor seized it. With the French, as we have seen, Diaz had repeatedly engaged, and had, indeed, been their prisoner, but with Maximilian he had not as yet crossed swords on any battlefield.

Naturally the task was a delicate one. The renegades who had gathered around Maximilian acted with caution and craft. They sought to convince Diaz that the Empire being now established in Mexico, it was better that the Liberals should work to create about the Emperor an atmosphere favourable to their plans rather than leave the field clear to Clericals and Reactionaries. Maximilian, they represented, was in sympathy with the Liberals, and with their progressive ideas, as some of his acts had shown. Finally they told Diaz of the Emperor's desire to see himself surrounded by the chiefs of the Liberal party, whose cause of Reform he would himself support when the country had settled down to tranquillity.

Had Maximilian really founded any expectations of winning Diaz' sympathies by these overtures, he could have little understood the character of his antagonist. The cause of Mexican Independence and the development and progress of the country in accordance with Liberal principles were ideals to which Diaz had devoted his life since that early day when, in the polling hall at Oaxaca, stung by an undeserved taunt of cowardice, he had boldly declared himself ready to give his aid in overthrowing the Dictatorship of General Santa Anna, and had voted for the revolution.

No arguments, no bribes, could lure him from the performance of what he regarded as a patriot's duty—to resist to the last foreign domination on his native soil. Tempting offers were

not wanting. Don Manuel Dublán came to Diaz in Oaxaca, proffering him, on behalf of Maximilian, high office in the Empire, and a promise that if he would give his support to the Government he should be appointed to command all the troops in the Eastern States which formed the area of his operations.

"I was indignant at such proposals," writes Diaz, "and the more so that they were presented to me by a man who had intimate family connections with President Juárez, and had even received distinctions from the Liberal party. I forthwith gave orders that he should be arrested and shot. Finally, the influence of Don Justo Benítez and of General Salinas saved him from death. Happily, he survived to wipe out his fault, as far as possible, by giving his brilliant intelligence to the service of the Republic at an opportune moment, and bringing about, by his efforts, the happiest results."

This last sentence is typical of Diaz, showing his generosity of character.

Maximilian nevertheless persisted in these attempts to secure the surrender of Diaz to the Empire. Dublán's mission having failed, General Uraga, who had been Diaz' superior officer, and under whose orders, it will be recalled, he had fought in many of the sanguinary struggles which had for so long been the history of Mexico, was induced to try his influence. The diary kept by General Diaz may be again quoted :

"General Don José López Uraga, who, in command of Republican forces, had gone over to the enemy, and was employed about the person of Maximilian, sent me his adjutant, a man who years before had been Chief of my Staff, and was now serving the Empire. He handed me a letter dated 'Mexico City, November 18th, 1864,' in which Uraga invited me to follow him in his desertion, and offered to leave me in command of the States along the Eastern frontier, with an undertaking that he would not hamper me with foreign soldiers except at my own request. I had had great esteem and respect for General Uraga, but I was fully determined that neither this nor any

other influence should make me waver in the fulfilment of my duty. For the rest, Uraga had lost by his conduct the respect with which he had formerly inspired me.

"It would, I thought, be a good opportunity to judge the temper of my subordinates if I showed them the invitation that General Uraga had sent me. I called a meeting of the Generals and Colonels under my command, and read them the letter and my reply, warning General Uraga that a second envoy, no matter what his mission, would be dealt with summarily as a spy. On the same day I sent a report of what had happened to all the governors and military leaders of the Eastern lines."

The remarkable letters which passed are given below. The long phraseology of the Spanish tongue has, so far as possible, been preserved in the translation:

"Mexico, Nov. 18th, 1864.

"Señor General Don Porfirio Diaz.

"My Dear Friend,

"It would make a long story to relate all that I have suffered by reason of my party. Luis* will tell you something; but let it suffice for me to say that without any notion of fighting, nor of leaving the country south of Jalisco, nor of limiting himself to taking from the people only that which might be necessary for subsistence, every one was hoping for and seeking a fortune in the revolution, and this whilst he had no intention of fighting, and, indeed, intended to be the hindmost.

"I did not consider that this was serving the country, nor defending our cause, nor honouring our principles; and being unable to embark or to get away at any point, I surrendered in June to the Emperor, acknowledging nothing, but in the earnest hope of ending the war. I acted wrongly, because I acted with distrust; but now that I proclaim here our principles, that I am listened to, that I contend on a legal field, and that I see how noble, how patriotic, how progressive and illustrious the Emperor is, I tell you, my friend, that our cause is the cause

* The bearer of the letter.

of the man who, a lover of his country and its Sovereign, looks only for the salvation of its independence and its integrity. He is here fighting with honour and loyalty for our very principles, neither extenuating them by apology, nor denying them, nor abandoning them.

"If I had seen any danger to our independence or the integrity of our territory, I swear to you I would have died in the mountains rather than have acknowledged the Emperor, and if I should have had the cowardice to come here I should have had the good faith to say to you 'It is necessary to fight.' But it is not so, Porfirio. I believe that you will do me justice, you that know me, and that you will accept my view of the circumstances. We lose ourselves, and we shall lose our nationality, if we continue this fruitless war without result. Everything will fall into the hands of the Americans, and then what shall we have as our country? Up to now you have a name clean, honoured, and respected, a good reputation, and means of doing much in the cause of progress, entering frankly and nobly into the work. To-morrow, fighting for the hopes of worthless men, for the intrigues occasioned by their pride, and to restore a situation now entirely changed, nothing will be left to you—not even a glorious remembrance.

"I send Luis to you, whom you know. This and my name, are they not a guarantee to you of frankness and loyalty?

"Luis will talk to you. I am here for anything you may wish, and when you come and see what is happening and return to your post and your forces, if you do not agree with what I say, say what you think will be better. I will work (with you) in everything. Let us remain united. If we have lost the system do not let us lose the principles, and above all let us cherish the country's integrity and independence.

"Adieu, dear Porfirio. You know how much I have loved you, with what frankness I have always spoken to you, and how I am the friend who loves you and kisses your hand,

(Signed) "José L. Uraga."

Knowing how deep was Diaz' admiration for his old general,

and how warm had been their friendship, one can imagine his feelings on receiving such a letter inviting him to play the traitor to the cause which throughout his military life had been nearest to his heart. Although the offer was thickly veiled, it is easy to read between the lines and realise what such a letter meant.

The reply which Diaz sent back by the envoy is pitched in quite a different key :

"Senor Don José López Uraga,

"Mexico.

"My former General and esteemed Friend,

"With indescribable pleasure I opened my arms to Luis, and fixed my eyes on what you were pleased to send me by him, because I had thought that his coming and his mission would have had quite a different purpose ; but although the disillusion was as prompt as it was painful, and Luis has offered me to talk to you frankly and fully, I have to reply to you, if not at great length, yet with all fidelity.

"I am very grateful for the mediation you are pleased to offer me, because, although I lament the errors which have given rise to this step, I understand the full depth of the esteem and appreciation it betokens.

"I will not constitute myself a judge of your actions, because I should lack the necessary impartiality, and before submitting you to trial I should embrace you as a brother and persuade you to turn back in your path. But if you can, according to your opinion, explain your conduct, I should not be able to explain mine, because the means at my disposal, the troops and people who aid me, who, as you tell me, were adverse to our cause in the Centre, are in the East so many pledges of certain triumph.

"The spirit of my forces is the same as that of the brigade I commanded at Puebla ; and you know that in few places have the French met with such resistance as in the State of Oaxaca. I have also troops from other States, but they are so perfectly identical with the others in their morale, discipline and enthusiasm, that they deserve to be considered their equals."

In reading this part of the letter it is well to remember that Diaz is writing to an old friend and commander who has proved treacherous to the cause, and naturally is not anxious to disclose the real weakness of his following.

"In the Eastern States the administration and organisation are so vigorous, and the supervision so scrupulous, that their limited resources provide us with the necessaries of life without our having to take them from the people, and without my finding myself in the pitiable case of having to bear with pillage and extortion. The French, since the resistance of Puebla, have done nothing but make a triumphal march through the interior; and I promise myself that in Oaxaca, if fate reserves such a triumph for them, it will cost them dear, and that it will be achieved only by crushing us with superior numbers. But it will not be long before we obtain the victory, and the whole Republic will the next day become one vast barrier to foreign aggression. *The struggle may, it is true, be prolonged, like that which at the beginning of the century made us free and independent, but the result is certain.*

"You do me the justice, for which I also thank you, to believe that I hold an honoured and untarnished name, for therein is my whole pride, my whole patrimony, my whole future; nevertheless to the hireling Press I am nothing more than a bandit, nor shall I be anything else to the Archduke Maximilian and the invading army, and I accept with calmness and resignation that my name should be defiled, without repenting that I have dedicated myself to the service of the Republic.

"I sorrow in my heart that having separated yourself from the Army of the Centre, with the intention of not compromising yourself in the politics of the foreigners, you should have been magnetised by the Archduke, and may come in time to unsheathe in his defence the sword which in other days you had given to the country; but if it should be so, I shall have at least the consolation of having remained in the ranks in which you taught me to fight, and having for my guidance the political symbol you engraved on my heart in words of fire.

"When a Mexican presents himself to me with the proposals of Luis I ought to have brought him to trial according to law, and not to have sent to you in reply anything more than the sentence and a notification of the death of your envoy. But the great friendship you invoke, the respect I have for you, and the memories of happier days which bind me so intimately to you and to that mutual friend, relax all my energy and convert it into the weakness of returning him to you safe and sound, without a single word of odious recrimination.

"The test to which you have submitted me is a very grave one, because your name and friendship constitute the only influence capable (if there be one) of forcing me to deny all my past, and to tear with my own hands the beautiful flag, emblem of the liberties and independence of Mexico. As I have been able to withstand this test, you may believe that neither the most cruel disillusions nor the greatest diversities will ever cause me the slightest vacillation. I have spoken to you almost exclusively of myself, but not because I forgot my meritorious comrades in arms, nor the heroic towns and States of the East, which have made so many sacrifices for the defence of the Republic.

"There is no room to doubt the loyalty of such worthy soldiers, nor of public opinion, nobly spoken and converted into decisive deeds at Tabasco, in Chiapas, in Oaxaca, and even at Vera Cruz and Puebla. As you know, the two former States have expelled the Imperialists from their midst; the third does not permit them to set foot within their territory; and in the fourth and fifth the fires of war are maintained over an extensive area.

"Do you think that I could, without betraying my trust, seal the fate of my comrades only to make my own secure? Do you think that they would not demand of me, and with reason, a strict account for my disloyalty, and that they would not know how to sustain themselves alone, or to confide their leadership to another more constant and faithful than he who had abandoned them? So it is then, that neither by myself, nor by the distinguished *personnel* of the army, nor by the towns of

this extensive part of the Republic, can the possibility of an understanding with the foreign invasion be thought of, *resolved as we are to fight without truce, to conquer or die in the challenge, to bequeath to the generation that succeeds us the same free and sovereign Republic which we inherited from our fathers.*

"I would, General, that, contracting no compromise, you might return in time to take up the defence of such a noble and sacred cause. That in the meantime your health may be preserved is the sincere desire of your very affectionate friend and faithful servant,

(Signed) "PORFIRIO DIAZ.

"Oaxaca, Nov. 1864."

General Uraga had at one time been most faithful to the cause of Mexico. He had been a patriot and an enthusiast, was wildly devoted to his men, and sure that with pluck and determination they would triumph. He had been certain that the Conservatives would be outdone, and Mexico would one day be herself again. Diaz was not only an officer under him, but became a great personal friend. In fact, the admiration of the younger man for the older was quite romantic at one time. They lived through many strange episodes together, cheated death on several occasions, and rose conquerors many times. All this must be remembered in reading Diaz' courteous yet indignant reply.

This letter is very typical of the present ruler of Mexico, showing how, in time of great stress, he was as true to his principles as he is now. Even in those days, now forty years ago, his own country and the feelings of the people had the strongest possible claim upon his actions. Mexico was, and is, the dominating note of his life.

But the blow of General Uraga's treachery hurt him more deeply than even his reply shows.

As these pages have indicated, Diaz is not only a soldier but a man of the strongest honour and integrity. Right and might are his watchwords, and he has nobly held to both through life. His friends seceding from what he considered right only

made him the more determined to aid his own party, and nothing but death could stop him.

Failing to find a traitor in Porfirio Diaz, or to manufacture one, Maximilian—or rather General Bazaine, the Emperor's masterful supporter and the pillar of his throne—did Diaz the honour of treating him as a soldier whom it would require a considerable force to suppress. An army was collected, the largest brought together by the French for any one campaign, to attack Diaz in Oaxaca and subdue the Eastern States into acceptance of Maximilian's rule. Bazaine himself went over to take command of the military operations. At this time he had altogether in Mexico about 35,000 French troops and some 8,000 Mexicans on whose services he could depend.

Diaz had busied himself with a scheme for putting the city of Oaxaca into a state of defence, but at the last moment his entire plans were altered by one of those instances of treachery which so much hampered the efforts of the defenders of Mexican nationality.

CHAPTER VII.

ESCAPE FROM CAPTIVITY.

Oaxaca was the scene of many important events in General Diaz' life. It was his birthplace, the home of his early years, the centre of government wherein, under the influence of Liberal ideas, his masterful character developed. As a soldier, one of his first military engagements had been to assist in driving the Reactionaries out of the city during the War of Reform.

Now he returned to Oaxaca as Governor of the State and of those adjoining, and General-in-Chief of all the troops. He was quickly called upon to defend the city against a foreign invader who came down upon him in overwhelming strength. The unequal struggle ended with his captivity, and for seven months he was held a prisoner.

The first brush with the French occurred in mid-December. The diary Diaz has kept of the events of this time is fortunately written with much detail, and from it, with but little addition, can be told the whole story of the siege of Oaxaca.

"It came to my knowledge (he says) on December 17, 1864, that the columns of General Courtois d'Hurbal and General Brincourt had met at La Carbonera, and together were advancing to Etla. We were occupying the farm of San Isidro, near Etla, and a cavalry outpost was stationed at Tenexpa, for the purpose of observing the enemy's movements.

"On the following day Colonel Félix Diaz, who had been placed in temporary command, received news that the outpost had been attacked. He at once ordered the Oaxaca Lancers to reinforce it. Hardly had the men formed up outside the farm

Asleep at the church portal.

[*Page* 122.

Photo by MRS. LUCIEN JEROME.]

Mexican-Indian women.

[*Page* 123.

when our cavalry came in at full speed, having suffered heavy losses.

"A moment later the French horsemen, in close pursuit, charged unexpectedly into the midst of our Lancers, whom they had not discerned through the thick cloud of dust that the horses had raised. The shock was tremendous. The African Chasseurs, fine stalwart fellows, fighting under the French flag, reeled under the blow, wavered for an instant, and then turned their backs upon us. Our Lancers were at once after them, and kept up the pursuit for three leagues, assisted by the Northern Legion, who turned out as soon as possible.

"Colonel Félix Diaz did not call in his men until he met the head of the main body of the French army marching along the road. The French cavalry suffered considerable loss in the brush, among their killed being the Comte de Loire.

"Four or five days after General Courtois d'Hurbal, at the head of a strong column of Zouaves, African Chasseurs, Hussars and a battery of artillery carried out a reconnaissance in force in the neighbourhood of the city of Oaxaca, afterwards returning to his camp.

"Some days later I learnt for certain that General Bazaine was advancing on Etla by the road from Mixteca, with an escort of 500 Zouaves, 300 cavalry, and half a battery of artillery. In this juncture I thought our cavalry might do us good service by attacking Bazaine, and, if possible, destroying his escort before it had time to effect a junction with the main army which was now pressing close upon the city. I completed my plans, summoned the cavalry officers, and gave instructions to Colonel ——, who was to go out with the brigade to meet Bazaine.

"The night before the attack was planned to have taken place this officer disappeared with the Northern Legion and the San Luis Lancers, near Tamazulapam, where Bazaine was resting. He moved on quickly with his troops to the hills of Tetela, in the State of Puebla, never returning during the troubled times.

"Meantime Colonel Félix Diaz, who was to have shared in the attack, was encamped at a short distance from Colonel ——. It

was not until dawn, when Bazaine, with his escort, began his march, that Félix noticed that our cavalry had moved off the ground. Alone he could do nothing, as he had with him only his own regiment of 350 horse, and a squadron of about sixty others.

"Naturally my brother was at a loss to understand the absence of his colonel, with the greater part of the cavalry. Convinced that he must be in the neighbourhood, he fired some shots to attract attention. No response came. At last, losing all hope and observing a movement by a body of French cavalry which might cut him off, he returned with his troops to Oaxaca.

"After this desertion I could no longer count on the help of cavalry outside the town, for the force which remained under Colonel Félix Diaz was too small to undertake operations against the enemy with any hope of success.

"In short, all my plans fell through by the inexplicable disappearance of Colonel —— and his men, for I had thought of fortifying and defending the city, depending on the cavalry to assist me in keeping a way open by which I might receive help from without.

"In the conferences I thereafter held with my officers I began to notice that opinion in favour of defending the city grew much more decisive. They did not approve my idea of accepting an open engagement, and I soon noticed that the reasons given were identical with those already expressed to me by the second-in-command, who evidently had not been as discreet as he ought to have been, and had not kept the secret plan I had divulged to him.

"I might even then have abandoned the town and undertaken a retreat by way of the mountains, but it would have been an extremely perilous adventure, for no transport had been prepared, in view of my former arrangements, in which I counted upon help from without, and there was now, with the enemy in sight, no time in which to improvise new plans.

"I never imagined that the result of the siege would be a victory, but I felt confident that the defence would be a long one, and that we should do the French much damage. I was

Santo Domingo, Oaxaca.

Photo by CONSTANTINE RICKARDS.]

Interior of Santo Domingo, Oaxaca.

[*Page* 124.

Marshal Bazaine.

[*Page* 125.

sure that the city would not be taken by assault if I could maintain the garrison at anything like its present strength—but that was the trouble. The desertion of the cavalry in the face of the enemy had greatly depressed their spirits. The disaffection of the garrison of Tehuantepec (one of the places from which we had hoped for outside help, and from which we had had no recent news), and the dissolution of the remaining bands of National Guards in the mountain villages, all helped to increase the difficulties of the defence.

"Finding themselves powerless, owing to lack of protection by cavalry, these bands were either in hiding or had dispersed, while many delivered up their arms to the enemy.

"These circumstances determined me not to attempt a retreat, but to defend Oaxaca—with no hope of success, it is true—still, I could fulfil my duty by resisting the enemy. I accordingly accepted the siege."

For forty long and dreary days the town held out valiantly against a much superior force, but the moment had come when its ammunition and supplies were exhausted. General Diaz' diary is still quoted:

"Just as the year (1864) was at its close the enemy was within a few kilometres of the city. Two or three days after General Courtois d'Hurbal's reconnaissance all the French forces, with their traitorous Mexican allies, began a movement to encircle the town. General Bazaine arrived in camp on January 15th, and thenceforward assumed the chief command. The French first occupied the great Palado Hill, Monte Alban, and the town of Xoco, and continued to extend their lines without any effective resistance on our part, though firing from the city at times made their operations more difficult. The French circumvention was completed by the closing up of the circle at San Felipe del Agua, on which spot General Jeanningros was posted with the infantry battalions of the African Chasseurs and the Foreign Legion.

"General Bazaine established his head-quarters from the beginning of the siege in the village of San Jacinto de Amilpas,

and when he was forced to leave that place removed them to the estate of Montoya.

"I calculate that the troops under Bazaine's command numbered some nine thousand men of the French army, and about one hundred traitorous Mexicans. These last were mounted. After losing my cavalry there remained to me in the city only 2,800 men. The besiegers were reinforced during the last days of the siege, for when Bazaine had contracted his lines and advanced his approach works, and even had fixed a day for the assault, he began to detain and add to his fighting ranks the escorts of the convoys which were sent to him. These must have been numerous, for Colonel Félix Diaz, with his little force of cavalry, fought bravely with many of them on the road."

Ceaseless struggle with no particular advantage on either side marked the opening weeks of the siege, but to the many perils to which the defenders were exposed from the enemy without, were added disaffection and treachery within the city.

"My troops (writes Diaz) were becoming demoralised. The havoc made in our ranks by the frequent sorties and encounters which took place for the purpose of hindering the enemy's approaches and the constant bombardment of the town, as well as the consequences, every day more harmful to us, of the disaffection of the garrison of Tehuantepec, caused wholesale desertions. In this particular work certain Liberal renegades were notably active. One day, while the French were attacking the fortified position at Libertad, the major of one of our battalions shouted to his soldiers to jump the trench, and he with more than a hundred of the men who should have defended the position went over to the enemy. Not without difficulty were the other defenders restrained from joining their comrades."

This was not the last, nor the worst example of desertion. A few days after a lieutenant-colonel of infantry deserted, but on reaching the French lines he was shot dead by the outpost, who took him for a spy.

"In the first days of February I received communications

from officers defending some of the principal posts giving an alarming report of the situation. It was, they represented, impossible for a force so small and so demoralised as ours to resist an assault by such strong and well-armed troops as the French had at their command. Above all, provisions were becoming scarce ; but if I insisted the officers would fulfil their duty.

" We had completely exhausted our supplies of both food and ammunition by February 8th. Some days before that the rations for the civilians who remained in the besieged city were reduced to almost nothing. They were few in number, but they went about from house to house, complaining constantly of their unbearable position, and thus further breaking the spirits of the soldiers, already sufficiently depressed.

" In this state of complete demoralisation, defence of the town was no longer possible. I could not sacrifice my men uselessly ; we had no reserves of any kind, great or small, and at this time not even a thousand men remained effective. We could not respond to the enemy's fire in the last decisive assault, which I now knew to be imminent.

" Accordingly I resolved to surrender.

" As I crossed the Plaza a cannonade and bombardment were going on, which undoubtedly indicated a simultaneous assault on distant posts and fortifications. Mounting my horse, I went out in person that night to explain to General Bazaine, in his head-quarters at Montoya, that the attack he was preparing was unnecessary. Observing no rules, nor seeking any armistice, I had sent no adjutant before me, fearing on the one hand a misunderstanding, on the other that Bazaine's desire for honour and distinction would induce him to carry on the attack against men without ammunition, without food, and without strength to fight. I supposed that my presence in the enemy's head-quarters, and my personal explanation, would prevent the threatened attack. Bazaine's longing for the ephemeral glory of assaulting the city was great, especially since he knew that he could take it easily, having already exhausted all our means of defence.

" About ten o'clock on that night, accompanied by a couple

of colonels whom I took with me so that they might be present at my interview with General Bazaine, I passed out of the fortified lines and turned towards Montoya. This was Bazaine's head-quarters. We were challenged by the outposts, one of which fired upon us, but I spoke to the soldiers, telling them that we were not an armed enemy, and they thereupon ceased fire. The officer in charge of the outpost sent us with an escort to another fort on the left bank of the river Atoyac; thence we were passed on to another detachment on the opposite bank of the river, and were finally conducted to Montoya."

Bazaine was sitting when they arrived at a small square table in a well-furnished room. His grey hair was brushed straight back from his high forehead, and his black moustache drooped at the ends in a way that gave him a hang-dog look. His secretary was in the room with him arranging the papers spread upon the table when Diaz entered.

The future President of Mexico wore a blue uniform with several medals upon his breast, and, holding his cap under his arm, advanced and saluted. Bazaine acknowledged the salute. The meeting was perfectly military, but hardly cordial.

"On my explaining to General Bazaine that the city could no longer carry on the defence, and that it was therefore at his disposal, he apparently thought that this was equivalent to a submission to the Empire, and replied that he 'was very glad that I had realised my error,' which he considered a serious one; for, he added, 'it was criminal to take up arms against one's sovereign.'

"I replied that I considered it my duty to explain to him that I would not join, nor even acknowledge, the Empire; that I was just as hostile to it as I had been at the cannon's mouth; but that further resistance was impossible, and further sacrifice useless, as I had neither men nor arms. His face suddenly assumed an expression of disgust. General Bazaine reproached me for having broken faith with the document that I had signed at Puebla, a document promising not to take up arms against the Intervention.

"I denied having ever signed such a paper. General Bazaine at once ordered his secretary, who was present, to bring the portfolio containing the signed documents from Puebla.

"The secretary looked for my name, and still hoping to find it he began to read the list aloud.

"Not only had I not signed when they presented the book to me in Puebla, but I had even gone so far as to notify that I would not on any account sign, because I owed sacred duties to my country which I was obliged to fulfil as long as I was capable of doing so.

"When the secretary came to this reply of mine he stopped reading and passed over the book. General Bazaine took it, read the lines, and closed the portfolio with a snap without saying a word further on the subject.

"General Bazaine then spoke to me of certain difficulties that he thought the French would meet with in occupying the city, for he knew that there were many mines which might easily explode. I answered that there were indeed several, but I had been obliged to empty them to make cartridges, as I had no other ammunition for the defence; adding that I could easily arrange to take the powder from the few that remained, for I knew where they were, and would order an officer to effect the operation of emptying them. This was done, although one mine did blow up, for a Zouave imprudently drew the cord and caused an explosion."

Later, the diary continues:

"I commanded my men to cease firing from the hills, and then advanced with a French officer and one of my colonels—Colonel Angulo—towards the Republican trenches. Angulo spoke to the officer defending the most advanced post, who thereupon raised himself in the trench and began to reproach Angulo, and afterwards opened fire upon him, thinking that he was a traitor who had gone over to the enemy. Angulo explained with great difficulty what our situation was, and told him that he brought an order from me to cease firing.

"Arms were then laid aside. Bazaine kept me for the rest

of the night in his quarters, where we spent the time in a room set aside by Bazaine for my two colonels and myself. I was thus detained as a prisoner, not knowing what my fate would be, because not only had I aroused Bazaine's anger by explaining my reasons for not signing the document at Puebla, but I had asked no guarantee for myself and my friends.

"In the early dawn I despatched one of the colonels, with Bazaine's consent, to give orders for surrendering various points. When morning came Bazaine sent me to the city with an escort of African Chasseurs to give orders permitting the French to enter. Behind me followed General Brincourt with a French regiment, and he marched to the State Palace, the French army thus taking possession of the city.

"The state of my mind while all this was going on may be imagined."

Knowing the man who penned these words, one can well gauge the overpowering anguish of that moment. He had begun the siege knowing the odds against him. He had fought against difficulties, encouraged despairing men, and struggled with lack of food and ammunition. For forty days he had been the mainstay of the siege, looking hourly for help from outside which never came. When the moment arrived that he could hold out no longer he went forth boldly, and gave himself up. To surrender the city of his birth to the French must have been a cruel blow.

"After the French were installed in the Palace," continues Diaz, "I returned to Montoya, and from there was marched to Etla by night, under a strong escort, as a prisoner of war. Every precaution was taken against my escape this time. I was placed in the immediate charge of a company of Zouaves, and was led between open ranks. Outside the ranks marched, on both sides, a line of cavalry, while detachments of Hussars brought up both front and rear. The lines of mounted troops were but one hundred yards apart. Over the fields at some fifty yards' further distance on each side were forces of Mexican renegades who had accepted service with the French.

"Thus we arrived at Etla, where I was lodged, by order of General Bazaine, in the best house in the place—the one in which he had himself lived a short time before.

"While I was a captive in this town a cavalry major who had served on the Staff of the Emperor Napoleon III. in France came to see me. He was now in command of the Hussars forming the prisoners' escort. He undertook to look after me personally on the march to Puebla, and was very friendly to all of us, but at the same time I noticed that he kept a vigilant look-out, and was prepared to shoot down any man who attempted to escape. He often courteously requested my permission, when the opportunity occurred, to give the signal for marching, and frequently asked if there was anything he might do for me in various places we passed through. Thus, under strong escort, we arrived in Puebla, where for the second time I found myself a prisoner."

Diaz thus speaks of his days of captivity:

"In Puebla," he says, "we were placed in custody of the Austrian forces, who shut us up in different prisons, putting the generals, colonels, and lieutenant-colonels in the fortress of Loreto. Here we were joined by other Liberal prisoners, and stayed for three months.

"While we were detained in this fortress, envoys from Maximilian came to admonish us upon our obstinacy, as they had done before the surrender. They wished us to promise not to take up arms against the Intervention or the Empire. Most of the officers gave this undertaking, but I remember that among the prisoners General Tapia, Colonel Don Miguel Castellanos Sánchez, Artillery-Captain Ramón Reguera and myself did not sign. Sánchez, in fact, not only refused, but couched his reply in words so offensive to those who proposed it that for some days he was removed to a dark and solitary cell. To secure their submission the French even threatened to shoot the officers whom they held as prisoners.

"Although Benítez and Ballesteros were amongst those who signed the parole, they were not liberated until some months later. After our removal from Loreto to the Convent of Santa

Catarina these two gentlemen were quartered in my cell; but one day I feigned a disagreement with them, and then asked the governor to give them other accommodation, which he did. I remained alone, as I had wished, and at once began to prepare plans for my escape. In fact, from that moment I commenced to make a subterranean passage in the floor under my bed, where it would be least noticed.

"When the work of excavation had gone below the thick cement of the floor I began to cut a horizontal gallery towards the street. My room faced the street, a condition which I had ensured by various means, not necessary to mention here. Alas! before I could complete my work I was suddenly transferred to another prison.

"We had been five months in Santa Catarina when we were moved to the Convent de la Compañía. Here I was allowed a certain amount of freedom.

"The unsuccessful campaign that General Count Thun had been waging in the mountains had put him in a bad temper. The day after his arrival in Puebla he came to the prison and called me before a court-martial. He curtly ordered me to sign a letter previously written by himself. In this document I was supposed to give directions that the traitorous Mexicans whom the Republican armies held as prisoners should not be shot for their perfidy, because the Imperial Government proposed to exchange for them some of my companions in captivity, of whom I might myself be one. I replied that I could not sign such a letter, and even if I did it would be useless, for being myself a prisoner I was not in a position to give orders that anyone would be obliged to obey.

"In reply Count Thun remarked in a tone of reproach that it was strange that I was not willing to sign the letter, when I had actually signed a despatch in prison and sent it to General Don Luis Pérez Figueroa. This was true, and I did not deny it.

"He then told me that he would never have imagined that after seven months' imprisonment I should be so insolent. Baron Csismadia, my custodian at the Convent de la Compañía, might, he declared, by allowing me so much liberty have caused

great harm to the Imperial Government had I profited by his favours and escaped.

"I answered that evidently Csismadia knew better than he the character of honourable Mexican officers, with whom Count Thun had apparently never been intimate; he judged them only by the character of the traitors who took Maximilian's service. I told him that the guarantees I had given to Baron Csismadia were sufficient between men of honour.

"The same day Count Thun entered the prison, and ordered that all our shutters should be closed, leaving the cells without light. Our confinement was made more rigorous. The guard was increased both day and night, and the men were given orders to enter the prisoners' cells every hour of their watch."

Diaz then goes on to tell the story of the preparations for his flight:

"Count Thun especially vented his wrath on me, which merely determined me to hurry forward my escape. I thought of making it on September 15th, my birthday, but as this was also the eve of the anniversary of our Independence, I remembered that I could not hope to carry out my plan that night, because the streets of Puebla would be illuminated for the festival. So the project was postponed until the 20th.

"I had managed by a little manœuvring to buy a horse and trappings, and these, together with a servant and a guide, were waiting in hiding for me at a certain house.

"Two confidants among my prison-companions—my only close friends in those days of captivity—invited the rest of the officers to play cards on the night of my proposed escape, in order to keep them occupied and prevent them from walking about the corridors and so seeing what was happening.

"Late at night on the 20th, I rolled into a small ball three ropes which I had surreptitiously obtained to assist me in my escape, putting another in my kit-bag along with a dagger, perfectly pointed and sharpened—the only weapon at my disposal.

"After the bell had sounded for silence in the prison I went out upon an open balcony near the roofs. It overlooked an

inner courtyard of the convent. In this place the coming or going of a prisoner would attract little attention from the sentinels, for it was commonly used by us all for exercise.

"The night was particularly dark, but the stars shone clearly overhead.

"I took with me the ropes, wrapped in a grey cloth. Once assured that nobody was about, I flung them up on to the adjacent roof. Then I threw my last rope over a projecting stone gutter above me, which seemed very strong, and secured it with difficulty. The light was too feeble to enable me to see the gutter well.

"I tested the strength of my support, and feeling satisfied, climbed up the rope and on to the roof. Then I untied the rope by which I had ascended, and took possession of the three that I had previously flung up.

"My walk across the roofs to the corner of San Roque, the point I had chosen for my descent to the street, was very dangerous. Opposite me was the roof of a church, at such a height that it overlooked the whole of the convent. Here a sentinel was posted, whose duty it was to watch the convent prison. Before I had made many steps I came to a part of the roof where there were many windings, for each of the convent cells was built within a semi-circular arch, and corridors ran between these rows of arches. Threading my way along and taking advantage of every bit of shelter, crawling at times on hands and knees, I moved slowly in the direction of the sentinel, while seeking the point from which to effect my descent.

"There were two sides of the courtyard square to be traversed. Often I had to stop and carefully explore the ground over which I moved, for many loose pieces of tiles and glass were strewn about the roof, which cracked and made noises under my feet. Moreover, frequent flashes of sheet lightning illuminated the sky, and at any moment might have disclosed my whereabouts.

"At last I came to the protection of a wall where the sentinel on the church parapet could no longer see me unless he stooped down very low. I walked steadily along and rested, pausing to

ascertain if any alarm had been raised. Here I was in great danger, for the stonework sloped and its surface was very slippery after the heavy rains. At one moment my feet slipped helplessly towards some window panes, which could have offered but little resistance ; in fact, I almost fell to the depths below.

" To get up to the street of San Roque, where I hoped to descend, I had to pass across a part of the convent which was used as the chaplain's house. This man had only a short time before denounced some political prisoners who, in an ill-fated effort to escape, had cut a passage towards this dwelling. In consequence of his denunciation they were the next day taken out and shot.

" I needed, therefore, to be very careful not to rouse him.

" Almost breathless, I reached the roof of the chaplain's house, just as a young man who lived there entered by the door. He probably came from the theatre, for he was gaily humming an air. I waited until he had reached his room. Shortly afterwards he came out with a lighted taper, and actually walked in the direction where I was crouching. Fortunately I was well concealed. After an interval he went back to the house ; probably it was only a few minutes, but minutes seemed hours to me under such circumstances. When I thought he had been a sufficient time in his room to have got into bed, perhaps to have fallen asleep, I crept on to the roof, and walked from there to the San Roque corner, which at last I reached.

" Exactly at this corner of the roof there is a stone statue of San Vicente Ferrer, which I had intended to make use of in securing my rope. Unfortunately, the saint tottered when I touched him. However, I thought he probably had an iron support somewhere to keep him up, but for greater safety I only secured the rope round the base of the pedestal, which formed the angle of the building, and seemed strong enough to bear any weight.

" I was afraid that if I descended straight into the street at this corner, I might be seen by some passer-by in the act of climbing down my rope. I therefore determined to go down by the side of the house away from the main street, which gave me

the advantage of some shadow. Alas! by the time I reached the second floor my feet missed their grip on the side wall, and slipping down on the garden side I landed in a pig-sty.

" My dagger first fell from my belt and dropped among the porkers. Then I tumbled in among them. Alarmed at this intrusion, the pigs set up such a squealing that if anyone had run to see what was the matter I should have been discovered at once. I hid again as soon as I recovered my feet, but had to wait until the pigs were pacified before venturing to move away from the garden. Then to reach the street I climbed a low wall. I had to beat a retreat quickly, for a gendarme was just passing on his rounds and examining the fastenings of the doors below me. When he had gone I dropped into the street and breathed freely once more.

" Sweating and almost exhausted with fatigue, I hurried to the house where I expected to find my horse, my servant, and a guide, and reached the place without further mishap.

" Once I was safely in the house, the three of us looked to the loading of our pistols, mounted our horses, and after avoiding a cavalry patrol left the city. I was almost certain that we should be stopped at the gate by the guard, and I fully intended to fight my way out, but fortunately the gate was open. There was a light within the lodge, and a saddled horse waiting outside.

" We went through at a trot, and once out of the city, to gain time we broke into a full gallop.

" It had been arranged that Colonel García should have awaited me at the boundary of the State, but as my escape did not take place on the 15th, as I had led him to expect—not, indeed, until the 20th—García was not there.

" We rode all through the night. Between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of September 21st, we arrived at the Mixteco river without any notable incident. I knew that the Imperial forces were not far off, and not daring to take further risks, would not abandon my horse nor my arms. While my servant and the guide went across in a boat with the saddles, and the baggage-bearers rode their horses across bare-backed (saddling them afresh on the other bank), I merely took off the

Vendors of jarros (jars).

[*Page* 136.

Photo by HON. HERBERT GIBBS.]

A Mexican river.

Photo by The AUTHOR.

Indian dug-out canoe, 150 years old; River San Juan, Isthmus of Tehuantepec.

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bridle and swam across, holding my horse's mane with the one hand and striking out with the other. Then I waited on the far side till my companions' horses were re-saddled."

That description brings a swelling Mexican river back to my mind, with its torpid stream, its slowly moving water almost cobalt blue, reflecting the heavens above. The trees clustering thickly to the water's edge on each side, so thickly in fact, that there is often not room to get a foothold on landing; those giant trees with their hanging mosses dangling in a fringe into the very water itself; gorgeous plumed birds, yet never a sound; just a dull, low, hot, damp stillness which can almost be felt.

Or then, again, the torrent after rains, the water tearing wildly on its way hissing over rocks or crags in its tempestuous course. The wind playing havoc on the border of the jungle, tearing the slender mosses from their roots and sending them scudding down the stream; the bananas, cocoa, rubber, castor-oil, coffee, mahogany, mangoes, bamboos, all bending, swaying, and cracking beneath the uproar of the storm.

"My fears about the Imperialists," Diaz goes on to say, "were not unfounded. After galloping some miles we came to the town of Coayuca, where there was a festival, and where I supposed we should find some of García's men. To ascertain whether this was so, I sent my guide through the city, while I and my servant went through the suburbs and joined him again on the other side.

"On our way we met the *Jéfe Politico* of the town, whom I knew by the stick that he carried. I thought it would be imprudent to pass without saying something to disarm suspicion, so in a short conversation I told him that I was a merchant going to the coast to buy cattle. The man, however, recognised me.

"To my surprise he congratulated me effusively on my freedom, and offered me his services. He pressed me to remain a day in the town, thinking I should be quite safe, and assuring me that I ran no risk. I refused his offer, and went on. We had gone only a short distance when I began to hear sharp shooting and

the hiss of bullets passing near to us. We galloped off to a hill, leaving the road, and cut across country.

"From the hill I could see that a fight was going on in the heart of the town, and I made off. The guide soon joined me, for we both knew the country well. He informed me that an Imperialist squadron had suddenly fallen upon the town, with the object of surprising some of García's men who had peaceably come to attend the fête.

"We went on without any further trouble to García's ranch, which was some fifteen or twenty miles away."

There for the present we must leave him.

Speaking of his communications with the Emperor Maximilian late in that year, General Diaz says:

"One day the advance guard from Acajete brought to my quarters over the hills—with all precautions usual in such cases—a person name Carlos Bournof. He had been commissioned personally by Maximilian to obtain my promise not to oppose the Emperor in a march which he was about to undertake from Mexico to Vera Cruz, protesting that he would be accompanied exclusively by European soldiers, and that his object was to embark with them in the frigate *Novara*, then waiting anchored in Vera Cruz.

"M. Bournof declared that this was all that Maximilian had bidden him to say, but, he added, as his own opinion, and as information that should interest me, that Maximilian held me in high esteem, and that if he could only count upon my co-operation, he would be prepared to dismiss the Conservative advisers and officials who surrounded him, and place himself in the hands of the Liberals, because he was at heart agreed with our political principles. Maximilian, this envoy represented, entertained great respect and admiration for Señor Juárez, but in view of his unquenchable hostility to the Empire could not make his sentiments known, and was obliged to act, not so much as he wished, but as circumstances dictated.

"As for myself, M. Bournof hinted that I might become Commander-in-Chief of all the forces under the Empire.

"It struck me that M. Bournof had been instructed to say all this by Maximilian, although he took care to give me to understand that such was not the case, but that he was expressing his personal opinions only.

"I detained M. Bournof all night, and sent him back next day with a verbal reply, telling him that I could not make concessions of any kind to my enemy; that my only relations with Maximilian were to defeat him, or to be defeated by him; that I was making preparations with this object; and that I would undertake to make him prisoner, and would submit his case to the law of the nation.

"All that night it was necessary to feign some marching of troops through the streets near which Bournof was lodged, as though they were of different forces. These men were accompanied by officers, who took care that the rule forbidding windows to be opened was enforced. My object in this was that Bournof should return to Maximilian with the impression that there were a large number of troops quartered in Acatlan, and that forces were continually entering and leaving the town. In reality I had only three hundred mounted men, although at that moment I could count on help from the towns in the districts of Matamoros, Tepeji, and Tepeaca, which were all friendly to the Republic; many of them, indeed, were in arms already, and burning to take part in any fight which might occur."

Did these indirect overtures from Maximilian to Diaz mean that the former had realised the hopelessness of his position, and wished to cling to the one strong man in Mexico?

It almost looks as if such was the case. It is an unusual thing for a leader to offer to join his enemy, or to ask his enemy politely to join him. The situation was a strange one, a weak, vacillating, imperial ruler on the one hand, a rough soldier of immense character and strength on the other.

Needless to say, by this time Diaz was looked upon by the populace of Mexico as a hero. A man who led armies, fought battles and won, was made prisoner and escaped, was dangerously wounded and recovered, seemed a being far

above the ordinary. The Indians believed he had a charmed life.

News began to travel quicker in those days, and when it became known that he had escaped from Puebla and was again in the field, the scattered bands of Republicans began to take fresh hope.

Again in the field! Yes; but let us pause a moment and realise under what circumstances. His followers were crushed and dispirited. Great caution was necessary, for he knew the French would spare no effort to recapture him. But ambition to free his country from hateful foreign rule made the blood tingle in his veins, and the determination to oust them, even if he lost his life, filled his soul.

Thus it was on the 23rd September, 1865, he began a memorable and desperate campaign, which lasted for a hundred days, during which time four victories were won and a brigade organised.

By appointment Diaz, Colonel García, two assistants, a bugler, and a guide, went to meet eight other men. This little body, now composed of fourteen mounted men, were armed with carbines and pistols. Fourteen men were but a handful, but under their able leader these fourteen were the basis of a new Eastern army.

With that small body of allies, Diaz boldly opened his third campaign against the invaders and Imperialists.

Such courage deserved good fortune and luck attended him from the beginning. Hardly had the hours reached sundown on that very first day before he captured forty Imperialists, whom he quickly enrolled among his own men. Thus reinforced, he shortly afterwards attacked a convoy and routed the escort, who in the mêlée left sixty horses and many rifles behind. Luck again favoured him. Seventy-eight men were next added to his little band, which was rapidly assuming more satisfactory proportions.

He heard that General Bazaine had sent Colonel Visoso with a company of soldiers from Puebla to capture him. At this he merely smiled, and renewed his vigilance. The weather was bad and detained Diaz for some days, during which time the Im-

perialists, numbering three hundred infantry and fifty horse, were at no great distance away—a fact which rather pleased Diaz than discomfited him.

Speaking of his forces he says :

"Before dawn I started on my march for Tulcingo to fight the Imperialists. When near the city, which is built round a hill, we overtook a man who said he was taking bread to Tepetlapa. This was strange, as I knew there were many bakeries in the town. I therefore thought that this was probably a ruse, and guessed that he was one of Visoso's spies. He ultimately confessed as much to me, and gave me some important information. Among the things he told me was that the enemy were then busily engaged in cleaning their arms.

"After a surprise attack on the church, where the Imperialists were mostly quartered, I succeeded in defeating them although they offered strong resistance to the end, and occasioned considerable losses among my little force. I afterwards picked up forty of our own dead.

"Visoso fled with his fifty horse, leaving all his infantry in my power, with their arms and ammunition, and some three thousand pesos in gold, intended for their pay.

"As was only natural with the class of men who were then my recruits, they seized the three thousand pesos, supposing them to be their rightful booty. I had great difficulty in convincing them that this was not so, whereupon I named a paymaster, and opened an account with the company, which was not closed until after the occupation of the capital of the Republic.

"On the following day I organised the prisoners who were willing to come over to us, forming them into two companies, called for the sake of effect, 'battalions,' and with my following thus augmented marched for Tlapa, being joined on the road by a small body of armed and mounted men from Mixteca."

On the way he received further reinforcements, and at Tixtla he heard that Colonel Visoso, with a mixed column of one thousand troops and six mountain guns, had driven the Republicans away to the hills and was occupying Tlapa.

Nothing daunted, Diaz collected all the villagers and townsfolk he could get, believing that their numbers alone would strike terror, as the Imperialists would be ignorant that a large proportion of his following was unarmed. Then he marched out boldly to try his strength again with his former antagonist.

His victory he relates in the following pages :

" I had an attack of malarial fever, which luckily lasted only two or three days. Hearing that Visoso had learnt of my illness, and, believing it serious, was advancing to overwhelm my columns, I pretended to grow worse and worse, although actually I was better. As I waited for him under cover of this stratagem he came to within a distance of six or seven leagues, arriving at the town of Tepetlapa, where I could, by one night's forced march, surprise him on the following morning. No doubt he was himself arranging some such surprise for us.

" I was careful to allow no indication of my intentions to leak out. On the night of December 3rd, I roused my forces, informed them of the task in hand, and enforced upon them the necessity of acting with great caution. We then set out for Tepetlapa. I knew the surrounding neighbourhood well ; but on arriving there learnt to my disgust that Visoso had already marched out at nine o'clock at night for Comitlipa, not far away.

" It was still some hours from dawn, so I followed after him without delay. On arriving in the early morning at a point of the road from which the city could be seen, I noticed on a small hill at its outskirts the glare of a fire. This was a post of observation, and as it was not yet light we could not be seen by the watchers. By a reconnaissance I made with two or three officers, I ascertained that the enemy had no advanced force on this side, but occupied the centre of the city ; that is, from the plaza or chief square and the municipal buildings up to the hillside.

" Thereupon I brought my infantry down from the height over which the road passes at this point, and hid them in some

thick grass and shrubs near to the first houses of the town. There I left them, with strict orders to remain concealed. Returning to the higher part of the road, where my cavalry was picketed, I waited for daylight, and then marched them down the road well within sight of the observation post. I saw a man run down from the hill, doubtless to take the news to Colonel Visoso.

"I expected that he would at once come out against us. This expectation was not fulfilled, and we had to work our way nearly up to the plaza and there fire upon the enemy, afterwards feigning a disorderly retreat, in order to bring them out.

"As his men on the hill had been able to see my cavalry, and even to count them, in the clear light of day, and found they numbered little over one hundred in all, Visoso roused himself and came out spiritedly behind us. When he had descended to the place where my infantry were concealed he was completely ambushed. Fire was at once opened upon him. While part of our infantry moved to cut off his retreat, the others attacked him from the flank. Just at that moment I put myself at the head of the cavalry, wheeled suddenly, and charged down upon him from the open ground on his left, where his men were fleeing in disorder under close fire from the brushwood.

"Visoso was completely defeated, and fled with only twenty or thirty soldiers, leaving eighty-one dead, among whom were three officers, and many prisoners. Almost all his infantry were captured. These were enrolled in the Republican service to form a new battalion for me.

"On our side we had eleven dead and nine wounded.

"Returning to Tlapa I stayed some weeks without any notable incident happening, profiting by the moment's peace to instruct and organise my small army. I marched through the State of Oaxaca, seeking men and means. When the small bodies of troops whom Bazaine had left to garrison the towns heard of my arrival in Silacayoapan they retired, for they knew full well that all the populace sympathised with the national cause. I occupied Silacayoapan on December 13th, 1865.

"I gave some orders for administration, and then went on, intending to surprise Tlaxiaco. After a few minor engagements

and sorties, the enemy cleared out of that town, which I occupied on December 22nd, pursuing them for a short distance.

"Then I returned to Tlapa. When it was learnt that I was again in Oaxaca, urgent messages were sent to Bazaine to despatch forces superior in numbers to mine to overwhelm us, but I was already marching for the coast."

Thus closes the diary of 1865, a year full of peril and achievement. Although General Diaz' writings are somewhat short and stinted, his conversation is not so in the least.

On the whole he is a quiet man, more given to listening than talking; but he becomes very enthusiastic at times, and particularly is this the case when retailing his military adventures. There is no doubt about it he is at heart a soldier.

Although intended for the Church and educated as a lawyer, the soldier is uppermost. Great self-denial and great restraint have been necessary to compass all he has done, great dangers have had to be encountered, and perilous moments passed.

What hand-to-hand fights those were for Mexico and Liberty —his eyes sparkle as he retails the brave deeds of others, or become misty as he recalls how many men he lost. It is in the re-telling of such stories of strife, daring, and victory that the great power of the man, the enthusiasm of the patriot, and the softness of the human side of Diaz find play.

Resting.

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The Aztec ruins of Xochicalso, Southern Mexico.

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CHAPTER VIII.

DIAZ KEEPS THE SOUTH AFLAME.

Two events happened in the year of Diaz' captivity and escape fraught with momentous consequences to Maximilian and his Empire. The first was the close of the Civil War in the United States of America in May, 1865; the second the terrible Decree issued in Mexico on October 3rd of the same year as a direct consequence of which, after a year and eight months had passed, Maximilian himself was taken out and shot on the hill overlooking Querétaro.

The downfall of the Mexican Empire was, in fact, assured as soon as the defeat of the separatist cause in the United States of America, and the restoration of peace gave the Government of Washington opportunity once more to turn attention to Mexican affairs. Their policy had never altered, but opportunity had been lacking, while the internecine strife prevailed, to give effect to it.

In the long struggle for independence which Juárez maintained, the relations between the statesmen at Washington and his Government were unbroken; they recognised him as President of the Republic of Mexico and the only legitimate ruler of the country, and lost no opportunity to protest to France against the occupation of Mexico by foreign troops.

The moment had come to make the protests effective; and even had the United States Government shown any tendency towards delay their hand would have been forced by the storm

of indignation occasioned by Maximilian's Decree of October 3rd, 1865, and the ends to which it was employed.

The Mexicans called it the "Decree of Huitzilopochtli," that being the name of the Aztec war-god, who was only to be propitiated by human sacrifices.

No more fatal step could possibly have been taken. The Decree was a defiance of the rules of civilised warfare, a piece of unrestrained savagery which the peculiar circumstances under which Maximilian held his throne—a foreigner upheld by foreign bayonets—made all the more unjustifiable. It is customary to attribute its authorship to General Bazaine, whose dark figure stood behind the Emperor in this hour of trial; and, indeed, the Decree is foreign to all we know of Maximilian's temperament and character.

It informed the people of Mexico that Juárez had fled from Mexican territory and crossed the northern frontier. This in the first place was a lie, for, though driven out of Monterrey and forced back to the frontier at Paso del Norte, Juárez had never left the country nor dissolved his Government. The Republican President, the Decree declared, had withdrawn from the contest, and abandoned his country and his Government. The cause, which, curiously enough, the Decree acknowledged Juárez to have maintained with so much valour, had at last succumbed. "Henceforward the struggle will no longer be between opposing systems of government, but between the Empire established by the will of the people and the criminals and bandits who infest the country."

Those who resisted Maximilian's authority, thus stigmatised as criminals and bandits, were to be treated as such, and, wherever found, were to be shot within twenty-four hours of their capture.

It has been pleaded in extenuation of Maximilian by those who are anxious to preserve his good name that he had been entirely misled by false information supplied him by Bazaine—which is probably true—and that he intended the Decree to be employed only against marauders—which may possibly be the fact. Still it is impossible to acquit him of responsibility for

the bloody deeds which followed, and which he did not exert his authority to check.* But a few days after the issue of the Decree, and before it could have been known far beyond the capital, the Imperial troops captured in battle, in the State of Michoacan, General Don José María Arteaga, General Salazar—the last being the Military Governor of Michoacan—Colonel Jesús Diaz, Colonel Trinidad Villagómez, Captain González, and others of the Republican army.

These were officers of high standing, some of them Mexicans of the most ancient families, and all men who had fought bravely against a foreign potentate on behalf of the country of their birth. Their position as prisoners of war availed them nothing. They were tried by court-martial, condemned to death, and forthwith shot.

Horror at this infamous deed, which was sanctioned by none of the rules of war, nor justified by the political exigencies of the time, was felt throughout the country, and, indeed, far beyond its borders. It literally meant that anyone opposed to Maximilian's rule would be shot. The fate of these brave men, who went unflinchingly to their death, created a strong revulsion of popular sentiment against the Empire, and aroused the bitterest animosities against Maximilian, upon whose head troubles were fast accumulating. Bloodshed was nothing new to Mexicans, who had lived in a state of active or incipient insurrection for half a century; but they had at least fought amongst themselves, and to whatever particular faction their allegiance might at the time be due, they were Mexicans before all things. Their lives and liberties had never been held at the dictation of a foreigner. If these men were rebels they at least rebelled against a foreign domination which they had never recognised.

* The Decree of October 3rd is written throughout in Maximilian's own hand. Count Emile de Kératry declares that Bazaine protested, and the statement must be taken for what it is worth. Maximilian a few months before his death admitted his mistake. In a letter dated February 9th, 1867, to one of his Ministers he says: "The Republican forces, wrongly represented as demoralised, disorganised, and united solely by the hope of pillage, prove by their conduct that they form a homogeneous army whose stimulus is the courage and perseverance of a chief moved by a great idea—that of defending the national independence which he believes threatened by the establishment of our Empire."

Salazar, a soldier of great promise, who, though young in years, had risen to the front rank in the service of his country, wrote to his mother on the eve of his execution : " My conscience is at rest. I go down to the tomb at thirty-three years of age, without a stain upon my military career, or a blot on my name." Even the Imperialist papers published under the shadow of Maximilian's palace in the capital were emboldened to print panegyrics of General Arteaga, whom they described as " an honest and sincere man, whose career had been distinguished by humanity."

It is difficult to fathom the impulses which governed Maximilian at this time. If the Decree was being employed for purposes which he had never intended to sanction, it was within his authority to withdraw it. The Decree was not withdrawn, and the sorry tale of executions went on. Indeed, from the statement which was vouched for before his death, that as late as February 5th, 1867, orders were given that Juárez and his ministers, if captured by the Imperial troops, were to be at once shot, it would seem that he was fully determined to follow the course that he had begun.* The weak man of unstable temperament, beaten in his well-meant efforts to secure the public good, turning tyrant and staking all on a desperate resolve, is no new figure on the world's stage.†

* The statement insisted that written orders to this effect were in the hands of the Republicans. It is right to say, however, that this is in direct conflict with the testimony of Prince Felix Salm-Salm, who was attached to Maximilian's Staff, and who asserts in his " Diary in Mexico " (vol. i., p. 36) that " the Emperor had sent Miramón a strict written order to treat Juárez, if he should take him prisoner, in the most friendly manner, and to send him to Mexico."

† Only two months after the issue of the Decree of October 3rd, and when the fury which it created was at its height, the following letter, which plainly shows the Emperor's determination at that time, was sent to Marshal Bazaine :—

" Military Cabinet of the Emperor,
" Mexico, December 15th, 1865.

" Monsieur le Maréchal,

" His Majesty directs me to acquaint your Excellency that in case Vicente Riva Palacios should be captured, he wishes that he should be brought to Mexico. *This exception is for special reasons, and is the only one the Emperor intends to make* to the Decree of the 3rd of October, and he desires that your Excellency will give positive instructions that, if he is taken, Riva Palacios should not be put to death.

" Chief of the Military Cabinet of the Emperor."

That Maximilian had striven honestly to rule Mexico for its own good there is no reason to question. At the outset some measure of success had attended his efforts, but the tide on which the Republican hopes had seemed to be fast ebbing had already turned. He was harassed on every side. The Clericals, who among the Mexicans had been the chief supporters of his throne, were alienated by finding that the Emperor would not—and, indeed, could not had he wished—restore to the Church the wealth of which it had been dispossessed by Juárez. The finances of the country, strained to breaking-point by the cost of establishing the Empire, were in a worse condition than ever. And away to the north the defeat of the Confederate States of America and the restoration of peace must have warned him that the end was near.

His administration had, indeed, been full of mistakes, due to infirmity of purpose, and to the fact that he never gained a real grip of Mexican character. He failed to dispossess himself of the idea that he was sitting on a European throne, and had but to give orders for the regeneration of the country and they would be loyally fulfilled. He forgot that "treason circulates in the blood of Mexicans"—as a French contemporary writer savagely expressed it—and that men who had been false to their former allegiance would be equally false to himself when it was to their advantage to be so.

Maximilian brought over from Miramar a budget of laws ready prepared, which were entirely inapplicable to prevailing conditions in Mexico. From his desk, at which he toiled laboriously, he issued excellent decrees. They were futile because corrupt subordinates to whom the powers were entrusted never carried them out. The supervising hand was wanting everywhere. He had a great opportunity of raising the Indians from their low estate and winning their undying devotion; but he let it pass by. When making costly additions to the Palace at Chapultepec he was apparently unaware that his troops on the frontier were mutinous because their pay was withheld, and were joining the Republicans.

A more suicidal act for a monarch so placed than the issue

of the Decree of October 3rd it would be difficult to conceive. It drove hundreds of Mexicans who had been favourably disposed towards the Empire to passive or active sympathy with the Republican cause, and from that day the fortunes of the little band of stalwart men who were upholding national independence in the mountains began steadily to improve.

On learning of the barbarities committed in Maximilian's name, the Congress of the United States passed a resolution, "That we contemplate the present state of affairs in the Republic of Mexico with the most profound solicitude; and that the attempt to subject one of the Republican Governments of this continent by a foreign Power, and to establish on its ruins a monarchy sustained solely by European bayonets, is opposed to the declared policy of the United States Government, offensive to our people, and contrary to the spirit of our institutions." An "army of observation" was placed on the frontier, and a general of high rank was deputed to attend on President Juárez.

Napoleon, in short, was told that he must go. Courteously, but firmly, and in language that permitted no doubt of its intentions, the Washington Government demanded that the French troops should be withdrawn. Mr. Secretary Seward, in a despatch forwarded to Paris on November 6th, 1865, informed Napoleon that the presence of a French army in Mexico was a source of "grave reflection" to the Government of the United States; that the United States could not tolerate the establishment of an imperial government, based on foreign support, in Mexico; that it declined in fact to recognise in Mexico any government that was not Republican.

France had lost all interest in the Mexican adventure. Thousands of brave soldiers had perished by sickness and in battle. A plain intimation by Mr. Seward in the following spring that the United States contemplated armed intervention in favour of President Juárez left Napoleon no alternative but to yield or risk war with a powerful State. Forced to withdraw his troops, he could only offer Maximilian a short period of respite during which to consolidate his position, or abdicate.

Early in the year 1866, Diaz was at Silacayoapan. Declared a "criminal" and a "bandit" by the Emperor's Decree, and with a price upon his head, there is little doubt he would have shared the fate of other brave men had he fallen into the clutches of his enemies, who were now driven to desperate means by the turn of events in the country, and by some minor successes obtained by Juárez on the northern frontier. As the French troops were slowly withdrawn from the confines of the empire towards the interior the Republicans closed in. Juárez with his force moved inland from the frontier town of Paso del Norte to Chihuahua. A few weeks later the surprise by General Escobedo and capture of the whole of the Imperial garrison at Monterrey, enabled the President once more to establish his Government in that town, and from there direct operations towards the south.

Diaz again took up the task, interrupted by his captivity, of upholding the Republican cause in the Southern and Eastern States. Separated from his chief by many hundreds of miles, with no communication except after months of delay, he was compelled to act on his own initiative, and make the best of the situation. Volunteers were not lacking, but he was without organisation, without transport, and without supplies, and already the country had been brought to the verge of destitution by the demands made upon it by the armies of occupation. He was for some time able to maintain only a small effective force, and take the offensive in operations more in the nature of guerilla warfare than of carefully planned hostilities. Here are passages from his diary, which show how his following was recruited in men and arms:

"When I was in Tlapa I learnt that a column of Imperialist troops under General Ortega was trying to pass through the State of Guerrero by Jamiltepec and Pinotepa.

"I therefore started to march through Ometepec with General Álvarez and some two hundred of the National Guard, with the object of meeting Ortega. On February 25th, we were encamped in a ranch known as Lo de Soto, when our advance force, at a distance of three leagues along the road, abandoned

their post without returning to camp. Therefore, I did not know of the enemy's presence until the first shots were fired on my men.

"On hearing the rattle of bullets I came out of the hut where I had sheltered, and saw the enemy's cavalry at a very short distance. They began to fire on me. I withdrew to the hut, seized my pistols, and broke through the back wall, which was made of bamboo reeds. I burst through two other reed huts, and on entering each in turn my pursuers were close behind. On rushing through the last I was unexpectedly confronted by one of my officers with ten men, mounted and armed, who had asked permission some hours before to bathe in the river about a league away, and were just returning. Jumping on the officer's horse I called out to the men to follow me, and with them charged the enemy, some soldiers of the Oaxaca battalion who had occupied a small hill in the centre of the ranch assisting our movement by firing into the enemy's cavalry. We forced the foe back to a ravine, the only passage available, and the same by which they had come, in consequence of a breach of duty on the part of my outpost.

"Once they had been driven to the other side of the ravine I remained to defend the pass. Being joined by reinforcements I passed through the chasm, putting the enemy's cavalry to flight, and pursuing them until they joined their infantry, which formed the principal part of their force. Then I began to retire myself, and collected my company in Los Horcones to resist an attack. But this did not come, so we remained in Ometepec.

"Some days afterwards, having received a reinforcement of about two hundred infantry, I again marched on the Imperialists, surprising a detachment of forty or fifty men in Pinotepa.

"The flight of this detachment greatly discouraged Ortega's troops who were in Jamiltepec, where I arrived just as that General had left the town. I pursued him, but as I had to cross a river my pursuit was not serious; it was useful because it caused the enemy to scatter and also to leave some of their arms and ammunition on the road, which we gladly seized.

"On my return to Jamiltepec on April 13th, I found four hundred rifles that Ortega had left hidden in his precipitous flight. These arms were fresh from the factory. Afterwards I collected others from the recruits who were in flight through the towns. Among the papers which Ortega had left behind him in his lodging I found lists of people to whom he had distributed arms. These with little difficulty I was also able to collect, and thus for once I found myself with more arms than men. The last rifles were of the English 'Enfield' make. They were better weapons than those with which Álvarez had supplied me, and which I now returned.

"Meanwhile General Ortega retired defeated to Oaxaca.

"I remained two or three days in Jamiltepec, but hearing that there was a strong detachment in Putla, I marched into the valley across the mountains. From the first villagers we met we learnt that the troops had gone away the day before. This made me press on with my staff only, so as to get provisions for our men.

"I had added to my staff by this time all the leaders and officers recently incorporated and not yet placed in the fighting ranks. Consequently, we formed a band of more than thirty.

"On reaching the town of Putla, with the idea that it was unoccupied, I saw a man pass rapidly through one of the streets with a red flag, and took him for a deserter from the enemy. Wishing to capture him, I ordered a group of officers to gallop to one side of the Plaza while I took the remainder to the other side. Great was our surprise when we saw in the Plaza the whole detachment of the enemy. They were even more taken aback than ourselves, and not realising that we were only a handful of men they became alarmed and hastily withdrew to Tlaxiaco.

"Profiting by these circumstances we fired our pistols on these few hundred men. They were more terrified than ever when they saw, on arriving at the gate of the city, a body of cavalry whose attention had been attracted by the firing, coming at full speed to help us. I at once ordered them to pursue the fugitives.

"Thus, without much trouble, we occupied Putla. Thence I went to Tlapa. While there a messenger came from Colonel Visoso, who had been rebuked by the Imperial Government for the defeats he had incurred. Indignant at this reprimand, he now offered me his services, which I accepted; but on condition that he did not come alone, but with other troops, all of whom must give me a clear manifestation of good faith.

"Accordingly Visoso, a few days later, left Puebla secretly and went to Chiautla, where the garrison were friendly towards him. That same night the troops there mutinied, killing the political governor and the military commander of the place. Visoso sent this news to me, whereupon I sent out an escort to protect him on his journey, and he joined me at Chila de la Sal, bringing with him two hundred men and a mountain gun."

Diaz learnt about this time of an incident which had threatened Juárez' ascendancy in the Republican camp five months previously. Lack of communications had prevented him receiving the news earlier. Among the twenty-two close adherents, known to all Republicans as the Immaculates, by whom Juárez had surrounded himself, was General González Ortega. He had been President of the Supreme Court of Justice, but his judicial duties by force of circumstances had been allowed to lapse during the wanderings of the fugitive government among the mountains. This man seems to have become fired with the strange ambition—strange at that critical juncture—to become President of the Republic, and by the time-honoured expedient of a *pronunciamiento* claimed the executive power. Juárez, he represented, had been elected for a term of years which had expired, and, there having been no new election, he—González Ortega—succeeded to the Presidency by virtue of his judicial office as President of the Supreme Court.

A critical position would have been set up had there been rival Republican Governments at war amongst themselves. Nothing could better have served Maximilian's purpose. Fortunately for the success of the cause, Ortega did not find the supporters he expected, and the leaders of the Republican forces,

almost without exception, stigmatised his action as a piece of treachery; he fled to the United States, and from that safe refuge continued to send back protests about which none concerned themselves.

Juárez, who foresaw clearly the train of disasters which must attend any dissensions at the Republican headquarters, solved the question by issuing a decree prolonging the period of his Presidentship until, in times of peace, the usual constitutional elections could take place in the country.

This was all communicated to Diaz by the Mexican Minister in Washington, whom he answered as follows:

"May 19th, 1866.

"Señor Don Matias Romero,

"Washington.

"I have had the Government decrees published here.

"The first, relating to the prolongation of the Constitutional term of the President, has been received with obvious satisfaction. I need not speak of my own opinions, because they are always revealed in my conduct, which consists in absolute obedience, or in absolute separation from any official position when my convictions do not allow me to agree with the course of politics.

"In the present case the step taken by the President not only seems opportune to me, but seems also the only conduct that he could follow for the salvation of the Republic.

"The decree which accuses González Ortega and the other leaders and officers is, in my opinion, well authorised by military law and by the customs of war.

"I think, moreover, that the Government has done no more than was its duty in this matter.

"Your devoted servant and friend,

"PORFIRIO DIAZ."

The life of the future President of Mexico seems to have been fraught with adventure at all times. No sooner had Colonel Visoso joined him than he marched into the State of Puebla to protect the inhabitants of San Juan Itscaquixtla.

Diaz tells of this narrow escape in his diary:

"While the declaration of the people of San Juan was being got ready, General Trujeque, who was in the Imperial service on the ranch of Tacache, a useful point of observation, sent me a message, offering to place himself and all his forces at the service of the Republic. As a guarantee of his good faith he proposed to send Don Enrique Travesi, who should remain with my men while I had a conference with him on the ranch.

"As the strength of the Imperialists was declining in the country, and I knew the treacherous character of Trujeque, I had good reasons to doubt whether his proposals were genuine. Nevertheless I set out for Tacache, taking only an adjutant with me.

"My men were very anxious when I started off without any escort, and they decided among themselves (as I subsequently learned) that a hundred horsemen should follow me at some distance, so as not to be seen, and hold themselves ready to come to my assistance should necessity arise.

"I passed Trujeque's outpost without incident; but this post was only a watch, composed of five dismounted men.

"On arriving at the ranch, and just as I was about to dismount at the door of the hut where Trujeque was lodged, his men fired unexpectedly upon my adjutant and myself from another hut on the other side of the little compound. My companion's horse was slightly wounded. We withdrew hurriedly by the road by which we had come, forcing our way past the outpost. Behind us we could hear the clatter of mounted men in hot pursuit.

"As my adjutant and I fled over the hills our position looked desperate. We saw a mounted force coming up which seemed bent on cutting off our retreat. Then we recognised to our joy that these were our own men. We joined them, and Trujeque's followers turned back.

"Trujeque wrote to me at once, explaining that what had occurred had been an accident due to the fact that one of his officers, who had not been informed of his plans, had recognised me. I remained doubtful as to the truth of this, although, had it been really a preconceived trap, they had only to wait until

I had dismounted to have captured both myself and my adjutant."

It was Diaz' complaint, not many months before this, that he had more men than arms. Now he had more arms than men, and was perplexed with the problem of how to manage such an army on nothing a day. His communications with the Juárist Government, often cut off for months together, were at all times uncertain. The army had to be maintained and fed by whatever means the ingenuity of the leaders could devise.

A modest passage from his diary, evidently written at this time, gives some indication of his troubles :

" The principal difficulty which I have to meet in getting together such forces as I should like to command is lack of funds. All the towns offer me men, but I prefer to have a small but effective following rather than a large one without means. With money, I could easily extend my line of operations to places where there are rich traitors who ought to be made to pay the expenses of the war. My means are so small, however, that a soldier receives only twelve centavos a day (equivalent to less than sixpence) ; as for the officers, they serve without receiving any pay at all. I could, of course, exist on loans from the towns ; but this is not my plan. I do not wish to extort help from them, especially when the townsmen are faithful allies who hasten to serve us whenever a chance offers."

Diaz' chief anxiety is always for the welfare of his men, that they should be properly recompensed and cared for. That such thoughtfulness was well repaid in a country where every man, though not actually enrolled, could on occasion become a soldier, and a most effective one, is well illustrated by events which happened to an auxiliary force formed by General Don Luis Pérez Figueroa, and led and maintained independently by him.

Diaz notes in his diary—he is still writing of the year 1866 :

" The most notable event of these days of July was the defeat

that General Figueroa inflicted on an Austrian column which was marching over the hills to the coast.

"In Soyaltepec, the scene of the action, ninety-three Austrian corpses were found; and on the road over which they were pursued as far as Tehuacán there were so many dead that they could not be counted. Those who did such effective work in the pursuit were not really General Figueroa's soldiers, but men from the towns who, supported by Figueroa's band, took up positions at various points along the roadside and harassed the enemy during their disorderly retreat. The less resolute left their houses and set fire to them so as to leave no means at the enemy's disposal for making a further stand. Such heroic conduct has been noticed in the towns of Soyaltepec, Istcatlán, and Ojitlán."

By the middle of August such progress had been made by the Republicans in the Southern and Eastern States that Diaz was prepared to carry on operations on an extensive scale, and communicated his intentions to the Minister of War in the Juárez Government in the following letter:

"Republican Army. Eastern Line.
"General-in-Chief.

"To the Minister of War,

"Profiting by the present distracted state of the invading army, owing to the operations of the Republican forces in the interior of the country, I have arranged for a general movement with the small forces that I possess in the States of Mexico, Puebla, Oaxaca, Tlaxcala, and Chiapas, and my plans begin to be realised with, up to now, good results.

"On August 10th, Colonel Jesús Visoso, with two hundred infantry of the Chiautla garrison, defeated the rest of the troops commanded by the traitor Gavito. He then joined me with his force, a mountain-gun, and eighty-six extra rifles. On the 13th we were again in front of Chiautla, which place had been reoccupied by the enemy, reinforced with the Austrian garrison from Matamoros. On that occasion I had expected that the enemy would accept the battle which my presence there

invited; but he only came out a few paces to take observation of my troops, without leaving the shelter of the fortifications, and then returned to his trenches.

"Here I received news that Colonel Ignacio Gamboa, at the head of the people of Itscaquixtla, had defeated the traitor Granados Maldonado, Prefect of Tepeji, killing seven of his men and taking twenty-six prisoners and thirty rifles, and at the same time dispersing most of his force. Of these, during the fight, twenty-eight cavalry came over to our side. Gamboa, hampered by his captures and closely pursued by Imperialist troops from Tepeaca and Puebla, called on me for help. I accordingly sent General Francisco Leyva, Governor of the third district of Mexico, with seventy horse, to unite the Republican partisans in that district, to organise and arm those in the neighbourhood who were disposed to defend the Independence, and to establish, wherever possible, Republican authority. Meanwhile, with the rest of the force under my direct command, I marched out and joined Gamboa.

"While this was passing here General Luis Pérez Figueroa was to threaten Tehuacán on the north, while Battalion-Commander Felipe Cruz, at the head of one hundred and fifty Mixtecas mountaineers, was to occupy the mines of Peras on the 12th. On the same day Colonel Manuel López y Orozco accomplished an aggressive march from Jamiltepec to Zola. The Juchitán garrison must have gone to Tequisistlán, to cut the road between Tehuantepec and Oaxaca. I await the result of all these operations, which should have been executed simultaneously. I will take advantage of the enemy's engagements to extend the radius of my actions on that side, and get some supplies for my troops. At the same time I intend to incite the Imperialists in Puebla to action by marching near to that town. If, as I fervently hope, the enemy comes out after me I will lead him as far from his base as possible and fight him alone if I be sure of the result. My chief object, however, for the present, is to rouse all those on whom I can count in the northern part of the State of Puebla, where the spirit of insurrection is beginning to show itself. Very soon I shall have the pleasure of advising

you of the result of all these operations, in which the forces from Chiapas, Tabasco and Vera Cruz are not taking part, for the first must be near Oaxaca, observing Tehuantepec, those of General García watching Tlacotalpam, and the others kept in reserve to guard against the Yucatan forces.

"OUR LAND AND LIBERTY!

"Tlapa, August 20th, 1866.

(Signed) "PORFIRIO DIAZ."

"To the Minister of War, Chihuahua."

Events now began to move quickly. From September until the close of the year General Diaz participated in no fewer than six engagements. Out of them all he came unscathed. The Imperialists endeavoured to shut him in at Tepeji, and for a time the prospects of the future President of Mexico looked desperate, but he managed to get away safely to Huajuapam. Here he escaped another treacherous attack by the renegade Mexican General Trujeque, whose former attempt on his life at Tacache was recounted a few pages back. In the guise of friendship and with the object of discussing new proposals, Trujeque rode out of the town to an appointed meeting place, but had secretly posted riflemen to fire upon Diaz as soon as he came within range. Fortunately, the bullets once again went wide of their mark.

The hardships of the long campaign seemed to have no effect upon Diaz' iron constitution. There is another side to guerilla warfare than that which appeals most forcibly to the popular imagination. Frequently the troops were sodden through to the skin by tropical rains. Provisions would give out, and when next they might be replenished none could foretell. Powder, when wanted to resist a sudden attack, was found to be wet and useless. Pay was most uncertain. Discontent and demoralisation spread rapidly among men under such conditions, and all the tact, courage, and personal prestige of their resourceful commander were needed to keep the force together.

Late in the year General Diaz' small army was augmented by a company which his brother, Colonel Félix Diaz, had raised,

and they advanced further into the interior, occupying posts from which the foreign troops were being gradually withdrawn. Two engagements in which he led his soldiers to victory immensely strengthened the Republican cause in the south, and further narrowed the area within which Maximilian's authority remained absolute.

Diaz told me that he considers the encounter at Miahuatlán, on October 3rd, 1866, when his strategy was pitted against that of General Carlos Oronoz and a French officer, Enrique Testard, to be his most interesting fight.

He was occupying Miahuatlán with a force of six hundred infantry and two hundred and eighty mounted men, having retired from the town of Ejutla when General Oronoz moved upon that place. His adversary had remained three days inactive when his advance was disclosed in the early afternoon by clouds of dust thrown up by the troops. Miahuatlán lies behind a group of low hills at the foot of the Cuixtla range, which afforded good positions for concealment and defence, and if a retreat became necessary an open way to the mountains. Northwards runs the road to Oaxaca, the ultimate re-capture of which by the Republicans was a task upon which General Diaz had set his heart, and brought all his tactical skill to bear ; for Oaxaca meant more than a town to him, it was swathed in the romance of his childhood.

The fight opened with a ruse. It was all-important to Diaz that he should gain time for dispersing his men. Accordingly, having ordered the infantry to form up and march to positions assigned to them, and the cavalry to proceed out of the town by another route, he himself went ahead to meet the enemy, and ascended a hill that commanded the road about a kilometre's distance from the town. Here he disposed of his somewhat numerous staff and escort of thirty men, so as to make as brave a show as possible, and opened fire on the Austrians and French as soon as they approached.

Oronoz' command consisted of eleven hundred infantry and three hundred horse, with two mountain guns, borne on the backs of mules. Not knowing what was going on behind the

hills from which the first shots came, the Imperialists judged that a general engagement was about to open, and arranged their ranks accordingly. A bend in the road after a time disclosed a glimpse of the cavalry moving in front, and the bulk of the infantry advancing by another route. Their general, who had brought in the cavalry from his flanks, now sent them in a charge after the Republican horse, but Diaz had already withdrawn the latter, and the Imperialists, sweeping on, found themselves assailed on both flanks by rifle fire from close quarters, and were compelled to beat a disastrous retreat.

Meanwhile a section of the infantry led by Colonel Don Manuel González had moved round to a commanding position, and the Republican cavalry, screened by rising ground, was able to deliver a sudden and unexpected attack on the enemy's rear-guard. General Diaz put himself at the head of the remaining infantry, and a simultaneous attack on front and flank was delivered. Bayonets finished the work.

Diaz thus sums up the results of his victory:

"General Carlos Oronoz fled with many of his chief officers, leaving the French leader, M. Enrique Testard, dead on the field. Testard had commanded a battalion of Mexican soldiery whose officers were all French, as was the case with many troops at that time in Mexico.

"Many of the dead were Mexicans, although they had been led by foreigners. Their officers, having lost their horses, which had been left with the baggage in the rear-guard, could not get away when our final charge was made.

"Among the prisoners taken were many French officers. These were sent to the hills for safe keeping, so that they should not hinder our future operations. Arms were taken from twenty-two Mexican officers, who had at one time belonged to our army, but had joined the enemy.

"Our prizes consisted of some thousand rifles, two mountain howitzers, and over fifty mules laden with ammunition for small guns and cannon."

A victory for the Republicans in Mexico meant much more

than is implied merely by the defeat of the Imperialists, for after every success, numbers of men found in the ranks of the enemy were willing and anxious to take service in the Republican cause, and the wastage of battle was more than replenished by these recruits. When Diaz moved against La Carbonera only a fortnight later he had sixteen hundred men acknowledging his command—rather a different affair to the little body of thirteen he had commanded a short time before.

The battle of La Carbonera (October 18th, 1866), began so unexpectedly that it looked as if Diaz would suffer defeat. The Republicans, in loose formation, were ascending rising ground when their scouts brought in intelligence that a considerable force of the enemy was marching on the other side of the heights. They must very shortly gain the summit. General Diaz arranged his force in haste as circumstances demanded, first sending ahead three hundred infantry under Colonel Segura to gain a ravine on his left, where they were to lie concealed in readiness to deliver a surprise attack on the enemy's flank, and if possible, cut off his retreat. The bulk of the forces were rapidly advanced, and the front extended in the form of a crescent.

Colonel Félix Diaz, with three hundred men, was posted on the right wing, which was a little advanced; and Colonel Espinosa y Gorostiza, with three hundred men and the two mountain guns captured at Miahuatlán, defended the left, the open road passing between them. The cavalry, numbering some three hundred and fifty horsemen, were held in reserve, and formed a second line.

"I had not finished arranging the troops (says Diaz in his notes), when the enemy, under cover of their artillery fire, sent forward a large body of French fusiliers, who advanced boldly, and arrived close to my lines before the fire from my rifles and cannon could hinder them.

"It was necessary at once to execute a counter-attack with half a column from each of the two wings. This forced the enemy to make a decisive charge with the bulk of their infantry.

"Notwithstanding that I thereupon reinforced the two half-columns with every available man, they were obliged to fall back on both sides to the foot of the mountain and its fissures, on account of pressure from our foes, who were now supported by the sudden advance of their cavalry, which consisted chiefly of Hungarian soldiers.

"I then brought up all my reserves (who had been forming the centre) into the front line, together with my cavalry which had been in the second line. The enemy, repulsed by this force thrown upon them *en masse*, fell back in disorder upon the hill forming the base of their operations. Here they still had a small reserve of artillery. I notified Colonel Segura, by a signal formerly agreed upon with him, and he appeared suddenly from the ravine on the high ground to cut off their retreat.

"This movement, which was made in full sight of all engaged, together with our vigorous frontal attack, caused the retirement of the treacherous Mexican cavalry and part of the Hungarian troops, whose precipitate retreat created confusion among the infantry. Some six hundred prisoners and four guns were quickly captured. In their flight the fugitives left behind another small gun intact, and the mountings of a second, but they carried away the gun itself on a mule. Before the pursuit ceased a hundred more men were captured."

Thus what had threatened at the outset to be a defeat was turned to a decisive victory. It proved costly in men, owing to the stubbornness with which the first attacks were delivered and met, but was most valuable to Diaz, who already enjoyed a great reputation among his countrymen as a military leader, which this engagement immensely enhanced. The troops he met and conquered at La Carbonera, numbering some thirteen hundred, were commanded by the Austrian Colonel Hötse, and comprised a battalion of Austrian infantry, two companies of French volunteers, three squadrons of Hungarian cavalry, and two of Mexican Imperialists—in short, some of the best of Maximilian's army. Fortune had favoured Diaz. He was

master of the situation and was able to march directly on his native town which, as we know, it had been his dream to re-capture.

General Diaz thus tells the story of the siege of Oaxaca which followed immediately after the battle of La Carbonera:

"On October 20th, 1866, I turned my steps towards Oaxaca, to commence the siege.

"The first news received by the Imperialist General Oronoz, who was defending the city, that a battle had lately been fought and that a column was coming towards him, was by means of one of the circulars I had myself sent to all the towns, asking for men and transports to carry away the wounded.

"He was still in ignorance of the result of the engagement, and so had ordered the officer commanding the fort of La Soledad (an advanced post on an eminence) to give him a signal as soon as he saw troops approaching—three consecutive shots if they were friendly, one single shot if hostile.

"Foremost in my ranks, and flanked by Republican soldiers, we had placed the Austrian prisoners. Deceived by this arrangement, the commander at La Soledad announced the presence of a friendly column, a mistake which he quickly tried to rectify when we came closer and he was able to recognise us as an enemy.

"It was then too late. I occupied all the line of outposts that I had myself held when defending the city against Marshal Bazaine. Firing between the opposing forces continued at intervals until midnight.

"On the following day I drew the besieging lines closer, and went on strengthening them until the 30th. While I was preparing to attack the strong position of La Soledad, as a preliminary operation to assaulting the buildings of the town, an envoy was sent out under a flag of truce, with proposals to allow my troops to enter and take possession of the city on certain conditions.

"I replied that I could only accept an unconditional surrender.

"This was before long tendered, and I appointed as a

Commission to arrange the details of the capitulation, General Figuroa, Colonel Manuel González, and Colonel Félix Diaz. The enemy surrendered at discretion, and we entered the city on October 31st. I enrolled most of the men of the Imperialist forces in my battalions, and set apart suitable prisons for the officers and civil officials.

"On the occupation of the city of Oaxaca I gave the rank of General—which my position authorised me to do—to Colonels Manuel González and Faustino Vázquez Aldana. I did not confer the same rank on Colonel Félix Diaz because he was my brother, although his comrades begged me to do so. But on this omission coming to the knowledge of the Governor-General later, the credentials of 'General-Graduate' were sent to me in his favour."

Before Bazaine sailed from Vera Cruz in March, 1867, having completed the withdrawal of the French army, he arranged with Diaz at Oaxaca for an exchange of prisoners. In this way a number of active men were restored to the Republican fighting ranks.

General Diaz tells in his diary the story of a deal with Bazaine in which he distinctly made the best of the bargain, and of some very delicate negotiations to which he was invited. Bazaine offered to his old enemy—not to Maximilian be it noted—the spare but valuable equipment of the French troops at ridiculously meagre prices. Diaz at once determined to get them for nothing.

"After all the Mexican prisoners (he writes) who were in the hands of the invading forces had been exchanged, I sent back to Marshal Bazaine, without correspondence, about one thousand foreigners, on the condition that they should be immediately embarked at Vera Cruz. This, in fact, was done.

"When I sent Don Carlos Thiele to Mexico City to complete the arrangements for the exchange of prisoners referred to, Marshal Bazaine authorised him to propose to me the sale of muskets, ammunition, clothing and equipment, offering me these things at fabulously low prices; that is to say, at a dollar

per musket, and a dollar also for a uniform of linen, with boots. The proposal also comprised horses and mules, with their respective saddlery and harness.

"I understood from this offer, and from the destruction which the enemy was making of his stores, and the sales at such low prices, that the reason of it all was that he had no transport to take them to Vera Cruz. Possibly also, he may not have had room in his ships to receive them.

"I declined to buy them. As he had to leave them, it was cheaper for me to seize them as the property of the enemy than to buy them even at a low price.

"Then I issued a circular to all the garrisons, including those occupied by the enemy, in which I declared contraband of war anything that the enemy might leave in the country, under any pretext whatever. A heavy fine was imposed on the holders or receivers, which would be awarded in its entirety in each case to the informer, who was assured of the fullest guarantee of secrecy. This circular was extraordinarily productive in its results, and enabled me to present to President Juárez, on his arrival in the capital in 1867, twenty-one thousand men perfectly clothed, armed, and provided with ammunition, the greater part of their equipment having been obtained from the French in the manner referred to."

Marshal Bazaine was willing to offer a good deal more than a supply of equipment and rifles to the man who was at that time the most vigorous assailant of the Empire, which the French had spent thousands of lives and immense treasure to establish and uphold; in fact, he proposed to betray Maximilian into the hands of his adversaries.

"Bazaine (Diaz writes in his diary) sent Thiele to tell me that, on his departure from Mexico City for the coast, he would remain five days at Ayotla—as he did—and that if I should attack the capital whilst he was there, he desired I should send him information by Thiele notifying the uniform of my soldiers, so as to distinguish them from those of Maximilian; for, in that case, he proposed to return to the capital, with the ostensible

pretext of establishing order, so that everything should be satisfactorily settled for him and for me.

"I understood by this message that he wished to indicate that he would assist me to seize the capital, where Maximilian himself was, provided that I would agree in turn to certain insidious proposals to disown the Government of Señor Juárez, in order that France might treat with another Government before withdrawing her forces from Mexico. His actual words were :

"'Tell General Diaz that I will repay him liberally for the *éclat* with which our flag might thus leave Mexico.'

"It did not seem to me expedient to continue relations which had commenced with the object of an exchange of prisoners and had been extended to this degree, and this I said to Thiele, in order that he should communicate it to Bazaine as my only answer."

What deep scheme was working in the mind of this rough soldier of fortune will never be known with certainty. Time after time he had urged Maximilian to abdicate, and with considerable warmth at their last interview, but the luckless Emperor still vacillated. Bazaine, a man of humble origin, had by his bravery and merits risen from the ranks to the highest position. He had acquired riches by means more ingenious than honourable. During his days of power in Mexico he had married a Mexican lady of good family. The customs of the country requiring sponsors for bride and bridegroom, Maximilian had stood as godfather to him and Carlota godmother. The Emperor presented him with the palace of Vista Buena. For a time he had enjoyed—and enforced—almost regal honours, and had exerted supreme authority wherever his troops were stationed.

He had lived in and breathed the atmosphere of a land where usurpers rose and fell in bewildering succession. The snuffing out at one breath of both the Monarchical and Republican chiefs, and the division of Mexico with himself as Dictator of the most considerable portion, may possibly have offered attractions to one of his insatiable ambition. Who can tell now?

The publicity given to this matter twenty years later, when

his career had been finally shattered by the capitulation of Metz and his subsequent disgrace, caused Bazaine much trouble of mind. He was living, an exile from France, in Madrid, and wrote a letter to General Diaz, then President of the Republic, who answered him in this wise:

"Mexico, January 11th, 1887.

"To Marshal Bazaine,

"23, Monte Esquinza, Madrid.

"SEÑOR,

"I have received a letter from you, dated December 10th last, the object of which, in brief, is to express to me your resentment at the publication of a letter of mine, written in 1867, in which I mentioned that, through a third person, you had made me proposals which I refused to accept, as I considered them indecorous. You ask me to give you the name of this intermediary, and you reproach me for not having paid acknowledgment to your consideration in refraining from publishing a letter which I sent to you on Feburary 8th, 1865, as well as for having treated me as a prisoner of war and not as an insurgent.

"As to the first point, I must tell you, refraining from any remark on the tone of your communication, that the letter you first alluded to was not sent to Señor Juárez, as you aver, but to the Licentiate Don Matías Romero,* in whose hands I usually placed all my information for the supreme head of the State on all that I did and on all that happened in the area with the defence of which I was entrusted. This was my sole intention in writing to him, and I did not publish the letter, neither did I think that it would be published. I correct your statement on this point, because this is the fact, and not because it would

* Don Matías Romero was at the time Minister of the Mexican Republic at Washington. General Diaz' letter was in these terms: "General Bazaine, through a third party, offered to surrender to me the cities which they occupied, and also to deliver Maximilian, Márquez, Miramón, etc., into my hands, provided I would accede to a proposal which he made me, and which I rejected, as I deemed it not very honourable. Another proposition was also made me, by authority of Bazaine, for the purchase of six thousand muskets and four million percussion caps; and if I had desired it, he would have sold me both guns and powder."

have been inconvenient to publish that letter, since the statements made in it have never been shown to be other than accurate.

"With regard to the second point, although some years have now passed, I do not think that you will have forgotten Señor Carlos Thiele. I must tell you, since you ask me, that he was the person whom I sent to you to arrange the exchange of Mexican prisoners who were in your power for those taken by me in the actions of Nochistlán, Miahuatlán, La Carbonera, Tehuantepec and Oaxaca; an exchange which was made with great advantage to the French army, because I sent as a favour all the chiefs, officers, and soldiers that were left with me when you had no officers of ours of equal rank to exchange for them. This Señor Thiele it was who, in your name, made me the proposals which I reported in the letter which has aroused your resentment, and who, a few months after the circumstances to which I refer, settled in Guatemala, where he can still be found. I should be very pleased if you could some day persuade me that the whole affair was an imposture on the part of this gentleman, and I would make it known to the public who read my letter; but for this I need Señor Thiele's own declaration, as the knowledge that I have of him does not justify me in doubting his honour.

"As to my own letter of February 8th, 1865, by the publication of which you think you could have done me harm—and might even now—this is another error into which you have fallen. I remember having sent it; and although I cannot call to mind exactly the terms in which it was written, I can rest assured that it does not dishonour me, simply because, looking into my conscience, both as a man and a soldier, I do not remember any deed of which I should be ashamed. For the rest, the immense inequality of numbers with which we fought, at least one against ten, and the circumstances and incidents of that campaign, are known up to now only by those who, like you and myself, were actors in it, by our respective subordinates, and by the people of the heroic State of Oaxaca. The publication of these facts will only enhance my military and patriotic

pride, and the necessity of answering any charges brought by you would put me in a position to publish them without the risk of appearing presumptuous, and with even more advantage if I should allow myself to compare the blockade, siege, and surrender of the fortress of Oaxaca with another contemporary case of the nature, but not similar.

"You remind me also—I do not know with what object—that I was your prisoner, and that you did not treat me as an insurgent. If you say this in order to reproach me with ingratitude, I can only repeat that it was chance, and not my will, that decided the publication of my letter which has so affected you. Whether you acted as you did as a duty or as a favour, allow me to refrain from any reply, for, however it may have been, I bear in mind that you have held the honourable position of Marshal in the French army. Whatever are the misfortunes that have oppressed you, and still weigh upon you, and the state in which they have left your mind and reason, I cannot, without offending both you and common sense, enter into a discussion which would have for its object to show you the difference that exists between the insurgent or brigand (*bandolero*) and the General of the Army of a nation recognised by the civilised world, who, fully authorised by her supreme powers, and under her flag, defends her in her territory against an invading army.

"I send you the expression of my regret for the lack of thought evinced in the letter which I am answering.

"PORFIRIO DIAZ."

CHAPTER IX.

THE BEAUTIFUL EMPRESS CARLOTA.

In the meantime what had Carlota been doing ?

A pretty and pathetic figure, she had been playing at Court with the solemnity of a wilful child, amid courtiers fashioned by her own hand. They watched her achievements with unconcealed amazement. She was striving to revive once more in Mexico City the pomp and splendour she had enjoyed during those two short years at Milan. Petulant, masterful, yet feminine in everything, she may fittingly be introduced here as a ray of sunshine amid the gloom which overshadows the luckless Maximilian.

Carlota—Empress of but a few fleeting months—found herself on good soil to give play to her ambitions.

There are many beautiful houses in Mexico to which the term "palace" might be applied, and many of their owners are rich. Sick to death of all the wars and strife of half a century, the younger people were only too glad to help the Empress enjoy herself, which she did right merrily. Dinners, balls and routs became the fashion.

Social civilisation was introduced into Mexico by Carlota. Men learned to wear dress-coats, and women low gowns.

The last Emperor, Montezuma, over three hundred years before, held splendid court 'tis true, but it was the pomp and display of his time and of a rude people. Feathers and skins had been the covering of the Aztecs, but the climate of Mexico had already begun to grow colder, and dress required to be warmer. The

Carlota, Empress of Mexico.

[*Page* 172.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

A Mexican diligence.

The Author riding astride in Mexico.

[*Page* 173.

Mexicans had achieved a higher civilisation under the Spanish sway, only to lapse back again during that half century of tumult.

Carlota arrived upon the scene fresh from the Courts of Europe, her trunks loaded with gowns, her cases full of jewels. All her paraphernalia—even her wardrobe and her piano—had to go over the mountain passes on mule-back to the capital. Her modern ideas, her ultra-Court etiquette, her love of pomp and display, amazed Mexican Society.

She must have been a revelation. People travelled little in those days, because of the difficulty of transport; and to suddenly find in their midst a lovely princess in rich apparel, of commanding airs and royal descent, must have stirred all hearts.

She shot like a meteor from the sky, and dazzled high-born Spanish and low-born Indian alike.

She drove about in a gorgeous carriage like a Lord Mayor's coach; * she opened the Palace and Castle for all kinds of routs, she entertained generously, she spent lavishly. She tried, in fact, to be the reigning Queen of the New World as the wife of her patron, the Empress Eugénie, was of the old.

She amazed the quiet-going Spanish *grandes dames*—whose ideas did not soar above chocolate parties and gossip, adoring babies and husbands, and getting fat and middle-aged in the process before they were five-and-twenty—by her brilliant conversation and daring feats of horsemanship; she had a good seat, a light hand, and loved the saddle withal.

In those days Vera Cruz Harbour, where the Empress Carlota and Maximilian landed, was noted for its insecurity. It was the chief, in fact, the only port of any consequence on the whole Gulf of Mexico, and except in fine weather no vessel could take shelter. Not only were the seas boisterous, but those dreadful things known as "northers" racked the coast. Carlota's first encounter with a "norther"—another bad omen, for their reception at Vera Cruz had not been very enthusiastic—struck terror to her soul, and no wonder. Well I remember my own experiences at this very place on just such an occasion.

Nothing in the world is more horrible. It is "awful" in the

* This is now in the Mexican Museum.

true sense of that often misused word. A London or Chicago fog brings despair to the housewife when it arrives just before a dinner-party, and turns her brightly shining silver yellow; but a smoky fog is a mere bagatelle when compared with a real Mexican "norther," which penetrates every corner of the house, and fills drawers, sponges, and even tooth-brushes with sandy grit.

It had been very hot for a couple of days previous to my arrival, and the air was heavily laden with moisture, like a Turkish bath. Everyone, therefore, predicted a "norther," and everyone, alas! was right.

First the wind got up—from the north, of course. The intense heat turned to sudden cold, and the temperature grew more and more chilly, until the country was swept with an arctic blast. The wind increased in force as the atmosphere became colder. All this was endurable—one could bear a terribly cold windy storm—but the wind had a companion, and that was dust. Once the norther sets in, all the dust gets loose, and whirls and hurtles about in a gale which defies description. Eyes, nose, mouth, ears, are choked with dust—hard, sharp, cutting, sandy dust. People are said to have turned white in one night; I accomplished the feat in a few hours, and, if report be true, poor Carlota's raven tresses changed colour even quicker than that, to her chagrin. Such white locks reminded her of the powder days of her ancestors in France.

Verily such winds are a terror; but it is no longer necessary for ships to flee from the coast at Vera Cruz in case of storm. Since the wonderful harbour works, constructed by English engineers, were completed in 1901, ships can get in at any time, and lie perfectly safe and calm at anchor while a terrific storm rages outside.

Vera Cruz was not an interesting landing place for this princely couple; it is flat, low, sandy and hot, and at that time was cursed with yellow fever, which, however, through General Diaz' wise plans, has now been almost exterminated. There was not a vehicle in the town of any sort or kind—indeed, there is nothing there to-day but tramcars, neither a carriage nor a cab. It boasts one attraction, a tropical alameda (garden), full of palms,

bamboos, castor-oil plants, and other splendid foliage, and poinsettia trees standing twenty or thirty feet high, covered with scarlet blossom.

Luckily both Maximilian and Carlota were accustomed to the saddle, for it must have been a trying journey to pass over the mountainous district between Vera Cruz and Mexico City. They were a large party, for they had an entire suite with them—French and Austrian officers, secretaries, and ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting. Some of these did not care to ride; in fact, had not the slightest idea how to do so, and consequently had to have resource to the primitive *diligence* of the country.

The iron horse is rapidly chasing the old coach from the road, but it still survives in the wilder parts of Mexico, and in Carlota's day was universal. These quaint vehicles, to be seen at any wayside station, were once painted bright red, but are now much faded by sun and weather. They hang on enormously thick leather straps instead of springs, and as they move swing from side to side. There is room for two people beside the driver; behind him and on top three can sit beneath a cotton head-covering, whilst inside nine persons can be stowed away, although it must be a fearfully close pack. Behind goes the luggage and bundles. In such coaches some of the suite travelled.

Whatever the discomforts of that journey may have been, the Emperor and his Consort must have been amazed at the beauty of the country through which they passed. I was there in 1900, and I remember with pleasure that long ride on the Mexican Railway, which had been finished twenty-seven years before, and is still one of the greatest engineering feats of the world.

It is a splendid journey. The line is often over a four per cent. grade, and swings round endless curves as it descends some eight thousand feet to Vera Cruz. The beautiful part begins at Esperanza, and from thence to Orizaba—famous for its domes—it is perfectly lovely. There are endless tunnels and high bridges, and so sharply does the route curve that the coaches have to lie right over to get round at all. The succeeding curve is often in the opposite direction, in which event over sways the car again on the other side, see-saw fashion, until one gets giddy

looking over the sides of sheer precipices down seven hundred to a thousand feet.

This line was the first built in Mexico, and the honour of its construction belongs to Englishmen.

Carlota, with her artistic taste, revelled in the wonderful effects of light and shade so characteristic of Mexico ; the miasmas and mirages. She loved the wealth of vegetation, the gorgeous plumage of the birds, the dazzling beauty of the butterflies, and sketched whenever time allowed. She travelled about with a retinue of people; did everything, in fact, to keep up the splendour of a Court, and expected and obtained homage on all sides.

She loved the life and was happy, or appeared so outwardly, although a feeling of uncertainty was probably gnawing at her heart-strings all the time. And—if we are to believe the French writer, Paul Gaulot—she and the Archduke were on a less happy footing than formerly. He had begun to resent a little her persuasion to take the crown, and was more inclined to strike out his own line of action ; still, outwardly, she appeared happy and contented with her rôle of Empress.

Best of all, she loved those days at dear old Cuernavaca, their summer home near Mexico City, with its glorious gardens and ponds, its quaint little Imperial house—and well she might, for of all the delightful spots I saw in Mexico, Cuernavaca still remains fresh in memory.

Back to the capital they would go for more balls and parties, more gaiety and display ; but behind it all the knell of death was beginning to toll.

One of the people I had the pleasure of meeting in Mexico, who has lived in the history of the country, was Madame Degollado, at one time lady-in-waiting to the Empress Carlota. A Virginian girl, she was brought up to the saddle, and while still in her teens married a Spanish-Mexican, who shortly afterwards was appointed chamberlain to the Emperor Maximilian.

Madame Degollado is now a handsome woman with white hair and fine carriage. It is easy to imagine she was a beautiful girl, and quickly found favour with the Empress. As she was the only horsewoman among the Court—for the ladies in Mexico

rode even less then than nowadays—while the Empress was devoted to riding, the two naturally spent much of their time together. Carlota, who was still in the early twenties, never drove when she could ride, and as there were no railways, all her expeditions were accomplished on horseback.

"The Empress was such a handsome woman!" said Madame Degollado to me one day; "very tall, exceptionally tall and thin, with great grace of movement. Haughty and proud in manner, some people feared her; but she had the kindest of hearts, never neglected a duty, was faithful in her friendships, and always thoughtful for others."

"What did she do all day?" I enquired.

"We rode generally every morning, quite long rides, escorted by only a few soldiers and generally joined by some men friends. After luncheon she spent hours and hours over State papers. She seemed to love mastering difficult problems, unearthing abstruse facts, and never a day passed that she did not go over those State documents."

When the necessities of his position called Maximilian away from the capital, Carlota took up the reins of government, and her control in both political and military affairs was by no means inadequate. Witness this letter to General Bazaine, which shows how active was her interference:

"Mexico, September 16, 1864.

"GENERAL,—

"My opinion is asked on the subject of the enclosed letter, but as it has to do with generals I want in the first place to know *your* opinion. For my part, I believe it is nothing but an intrigue which proves the very contrary of that which is sought to be shown.

"Be kind enough to give me the requisite information, and send me the paper after you have read it, for M. Velasquez wishes me to give him an answer to-morrow.

"It will fall upon you to deal with various questions with which we are occupied in the Council. The most important is the pacification of the Sierra. The prefect of Tulcingo has some

ideas about it which are not bad. It seems to me that by sending some detachments to a fixed post, and some others to make expeditions, good results will be produced. Only in this case I would ask you to give me notice, so that the civil authorities may arrange measures to co-operate with yours in helping on the undertaking.

"If it were possible to arrange beforehand certain movements, keeping them in the meantime as secret as possible, I think it would produce great results, and the passage of the troops might be followed by some kind of organisation.

"As for the Indians who are desirous to defend themselves against the Plateados, you must tell me if you think that it is necessary to provide them with arms. This sort of thing begins to get too frequent, and as for money, the Government have resolved not to give any to anyone.

"Believe, General, etc.,

"CHARLOTTE.

"I hope that you know all about the army for the 16th, and also that it will be reviewed as soon as I return to the Palace, and before the reception of the authorities. You did not give me any memorandum as to it on Sunday."

Of Carlota's unbounded energy Madame Degollado went on to say:

"I never saw such an industrious woman in my life. She read a great deal in several languages, besides personally conducting all the correspondence with the crowned heads of Europe. For her amusement, she sketched and painted. Both she and the Emperor were excellent Spanish scholars, and she spoke wonderful English. In fact, they were both extraordinarily fluent linguists, and I remember once hearing the Emperor say he thought he knew eleven German dialects."

"'The Empress ought to have been the man and I the woman,' he once laughingly remarked. 'She prefers the drum, I prefer the bâton.'"

"And was that true?"

"Yes, I think so; she had much the stronger nature. She

had a masterful mind, but it was a little unbalanced by ambition. He was a dreamer, a cultured gentleman, a man of artistic temperament, but not strong enough to rule.

" Had he lived, however, Mexico would have benefited by his taste and talent in many ways. For instance, he was a born architect, and loved drawing out plans ; there is no doubt about it, he would have done much to beautify the city. The zocalo was his work, while the Empress founded a hospital, and was active in charitable deeds. They certainly both had the betterment and improvement of their capital at heart."

" Was she happy ? " I asked.

" No, I think not ; in the first place, the grief of her life was not having a child, and then she always felt the insecurity of the Emperor's position."

Poor Carlota ! Her life seems to have been clouded from the first. Even her childhood was a lonely one, as old King Leopold would not allow her any playfellows but her brothers.

" A Princess must not mix with her father's subjects," he said, and accordingly her two brothers were her only companions. She had a charming French governess in Belgium, who often deplored her want of childish friends, and encouraged her to find amusement elsewhere by collecting butterflies, and keeping them in large glass cases filled with flowers and fruit. This woman did much to awaken Carlota's love of nature and beauty. Even as a child the Princess was obstinate and ambitious, and never did these traits show more strongly than when she opposed her father's attempt to prevent Maximilian's acceptance of the Mexican crown.

Speaking of Cuernavaca, where, by the way, Cortéz first made sugar in the form of a sugar loaf (his moulds are still in use to-day), and of the lovely garden where the Imperial pair spent so much of their time, Madame Degollado said :

" The Empress loved that beautiful spot. We used constantly to ride there. By the mountain passes it was only a distance of some thirty miles from the capital. We would get up very early, and start about four o'clock. She and I rode, accompanied by her gentlemen-in-waiting, and the Guardo de Palatin, the

Empress's own guard of about one hundred and fifty men. Some of her escort always went on ahead, and pitched the tents at the spot where we were to stop for luncheon and rest during the heat of the day.

"It was quite a caravan, and a necessary one, for in those days robbery was an every-day occurrence, and not only did the bandits stop the diligences, but they often stripped passengers of their very clothes."

When I asked Madame Degollado if she had ever experienced adventures with these highwaymen, she answered gaily:

"Oh, yes, nine times I have been in large or small robberies by the roadside."

A halt was called for the Royal cortège for luncheon, and the carriages, with the ladies-in-waiting devoutly telling their beads in gratitude for having proceeded so far on their perilous journey in safety, would arrive, likewise the servants and luggage.

Madame Degollado has a beautiful house in Mexico City, which contains many interesting relics of those Imperial days. One of the most interesting of all is the least connected with Maximilian—which sounds somewhat like an Irishism. It is Cortéz' own desk. Father Fischer, a German priest and confessor to the Emperor, who later pleaded with Diaz for Maximilian's abdication, gave it to her. It is wonderful. Outside it resembles a miniature bureau, or large desk of inlaid wood, and round the key-hole on a silver plate are the arms of Cortéz. Formerly it was studded with silver nails, but these have been picked out. Inside it is Chinese, and not only Chinese, but a Chinese puzzle. It is lacquered scarlet, painted, and every corner contains a secret drawer. There are literally dozens of these, so many that it seems impossible that anyone could ever have made such an ingenious affair. False bottoms are endless. It is certainly a curiosity.

Beside the desk stands a beautiful bust of Humboldt, by an Italian, which always occupied a place in Maximilian's study, for he was an earnest admirer of the great German traveller, who was one of the first to write on the wondrous possibilities of Mexico. There is also a gem of a crucifix in ivory, given by the Pope to

Maximilian to hold in his hand when, it will be remembered, he went to Rome in 1864, before setting out for his new Empire. It bears the Papal arms in gold, as well as the Royal crest, and the Pope presented it with his blessing as a souvenir of the occasion.

Perhaps the saddest little relic of all is a pillow-case used by the Emperor on the last night he slept in Mexico City. It is made of finest lawn with lace insertion, and the Royal Crown is embroidered on it. The centre is mounted on pale blue silk. What pathetic trifles these are, reminding one of a sadly troubled life.

The tranquil, happy course of Carlota's days was destined soon to be broken up. As she lived in this dreamland of sovereignty, filling a romantic part after her own heart, Napoleon's determination to withdraw the French troops called her back to the stern realities of her position. It was hardly likely she could realise that their former friend and patron could throw them over without a regret as soon as he learned they could not add to his own glorification in the Western world. It was a crushing blow to all her hopes. She understood better than Maximilian that the stability of his empire rested entirely upon the foreign force which he had at his command, and how little he would be able to depend on Mexican loyalty to his throne when once that force was removed.

In the Treaty signed in the Castle of Miramar Napoleon had pledged himself to maintain a French army of 25,000 men in Mexico for six years. Maximilian might in that time have consolidated his position. Less than two years had now passed.

Little of the horrors of war which still devastated large areas of the country had, it is true, been seen by the light-hearted Queen. For a long distance around the capital the Republicans were in insufficient strength even to risk an occasional raid. But Carlota doubtless kept herself informed of their numbers in the hills, and realised that the area of her husband's empire was circumscribed by the bayonets of the French outposts. As these were withdrawn the spirit of unrest present among the people would be loosened. The Republicans, gathering strength, would close

in, and unless something effective were done, it would be only a matter of time before the capital itself was menaced.

She realised that Diaz and his party were gaining ground, and learnt to fear the General's name. She heard of his strength and his ever-increasing following, his ceaseless determination to oust her husband's imperial power, and re-establish the Republic. She talked to Marshal Bazaine, discussed plans with him, and tried to suggest means for Diaz' defeat. But for him Maximilian might have been reigning in Mexico to-day ; that is to say, he might have become so popular and gained the love of the people to such a degree that their allegiance would not have deserted him when his friend and adviser, Napoleon, left him so cruelly. It was the strength of the Republican forces, headed by Diaz, that was Maximilian's chief peril, and he knew it. The mesh of fate was encircling him.

In this crisis of his life, Maximilian seems to have been incapable of coming to any decision. Napoleon hinted at abdication as his most politic step. Bazaine advised him openly to abandon his throne. Carlota, loth to give up the Court with which she had surrounded herself, and return to insignificance in Europe, with the consciousness of failure to embitter her future years, would not hear of leaving the country while any hope remained.

Maximilian talked of abdication, but took no steps to abdicate. He listened again to the pleadings of his wife, lending a ready ear to those advisers who told him that his duty to the country and to those who had espoused his cause forbade his leaving in the hour of peril.

Finally, on July 7th, 1866, conscious at last of the hopelessness of his situation, the distracted Emperor had decided on abdication, and was preparing to sign the deed renouncing his throne, when Carlota broke in upon him with a project which once more swerved him from his purpose.

She would herself go to Paris ; she would confront Napoleon ; exert all the strength of her influence over him ; insist that he should keep the solemn pledge he had given to Mexico, when, at his own instance, and for his own purposes, the Empire was

created. She would see the Pope, and claim the protection of the Holy Church.

Maximilian weakly assented to this extraordinary embassy on his behalf. The treasury was empty ; exhausted by the cost of maintaining the French army. Funds for the august traveller were, however, found by confiscating the taxes collected for the great works by which the capital was preserved from inundation.

Carlota sailed alone to Europe. First she went to Paris, where, to her surprise, she was *not* met at the station by her old friend, Napoleon III. The Minister of State was sympathetic, but had no authority to grant her requests.

Napoleon refused repeatedly to see her, but her entreaties became so importunate that he at last consented. She drove out to St. Cloud, with a Mexican lady-in-waiting, and sought an audience with the Emperor of the French.

He received her coldly. She told her tale ; he listened. She repeated her case. He merely rose and paced the room again and again. She returned to the subject of her mission. He still kept his head in the air, coldly nodding, but not assenting. At last she became more moved, more dramatic, for was not her whole life and her husband's dependent on that hour ? Napoleon quietly remarked that he had done all that was possible for Maximilian, and declared calmly that he could do no more. Neither the cause of friendship nor the call of honour moved him.

Finally, in tears Carlota *begged* his aid.

He refused peremptorily.

Indignantly she turned upon him, exclaiming, fire blazing in her eyes :

" Fool—fool that I was to lower my Royal house by begging favour of a plebeian upstart ! "

That was her parting shot.

" She left his presence a crushed woman," said my informant, who drove back with her to Paris. From that time the Empress became a changed person, mentally and bodily a wreck, by turns silent and hysterical. The strain had been too great. Her hopes and dreams had been shattered, and amid her rambling

utterances she gave expression to words which showed only too clearly that she entertained the darkest presentiments of Maximilian's fate.

She was taken to Switzerland in the hope that rest would restore her strength, and away in the solitude of the mountains her health made some improvement.

But there was no repose for her restless spirit. Despite the protest of her attendants she journeyed to Rome, to make a personal appeal to the Pope to intervene on behalf of her husband. One morning the whole Papal Court was thrown into excitement when she appeared in the prohibited bonnet, instead of the black shawl or mantilla always worn in the presence of His Holiness, and insisted on making her way to the Pontiff's apartments.

The following sympathetic account of her audience at the Vatican is taken from Fitzgerald Molloy's delightful volume, "The Romance of Royalty":

"Her appearance and manner at once assured Pius IX. of her insanity, when, shocked and sorrowful, he strove to soothe her. For awhile he listened compassionately to her wandering statements, and then sent for Cardinal Antonelli and Dr. Semelader. Both endeavoured to calm her and to take her away; but she absolutely declined to quit the Vatican, saying that if she did so the assassins who waited outside would kill her. A long day passed, evening came, and she still persisted in her refusal to leave. The Papal Court was alarmed at the prospect of one of her sex remaining within its walls all night; but unwilling that force should be used, the Pope ordered that two beds should be placed in the library for the Empress and one of her ladies.

"Next day she was as firmly resolved as ever to remain in this place of refuge, until two nuns who had been sent for induced her to visit their convent. She consented to go with them on the condition that one of them sat on each side of her in a closed carriage, while to escape identification she would cover her face with a handkerchief.

"The unhappy woman had not been many hours at the convent before she became violent. With the greatest difficulty she was

taken to her hotel, and before night it was found necessary to place her in a strait-jacket. Relatives were telegraphed for, and she was taken to her beautiful home at Miramar, whose peace it was hoped would soothe and restore her distracted mind. For a brief while it seemed to have this effect, but presently her insanity—during which she never for a moment forgot her Imperial rank—took an aggressive and hopeless form, when she was removed to the Castle of Laeken, in Belgium."

Carlota still lives in one of the King of the Belgians' palaces near Brussels, dead to the world but yet alive. Nearly forty years have passed since her long widowhood began ; her hair has whitened, and her intense physical and mental suffering has left its mark on her at no time strong frame. Even now she often thinks herself Empress of Mexico, and plays in comedy the rôle she sustained in tragedy.

Always hopeful, she waits for her husband's return. Day after day she looks for him, even now, for it is said that in her European home she still firmly believes he is alive.

Maximilian was thus left utterly alone. The wife to whose counsels he had so often bent was by a hard decree of fate taken from his side. Napoleon's support was no longer given, and each week as the French troops were called in for embarkation he witnessed his influence in Mexico dwindling away. To whom was he to turn ?

The Emperor had completed all arrangements to journey to Vera Cruz to meet Carlota, whose return from Europe he was daily expecting, when " the terrible blow caused by the late news," as he wrote to Marshal Bazaine, struck him down. The hour for departure from the Palace of Chapultepec approached. The large escort which was to guard his person from the attacks of either Juárist or marauding bands, was drawn up awaiting orders. A telegraphic despatch forwarded from the United States was handed to him. It contained the appalling intelligence of Carlota's madness.

Nevertheless, he gave orders for a start for Orizaba, the first stage of the journey, to be made that night. It would seem

that the shock had at last fixed his wavering purpose to leave the country. The Austrian frigate *Elizabeth* had already arrived at Vera Cruz and was awaiting his embarkation. The Imperial luggage, too, had been sent on ahead, while Maximilian still hesitated whether he should stay or go.

That he was now fully determined to leave Mexico is shown by a confidential letter he addressed to Marshal Bazaine on the day following the receipt of the news of his wife's madness :

"Hacienda de Zoquiapa,
"October 21, 1866 (evening).

"My dear Marshal,—

"To-morrow I propose to place in your hands the documents necessary to put an end to the onerous and perplexing position in which my person as well as the whole of Mexico is now placed. *These documents must be kept in reserve until the day which I shall intimate to you by telegraph.*

"Three points weigh upon my mind, and I desire at once to throw off the responsibility incumbent on me in respect to them.

"The first : That the courts-martial cease to interfere in political delinquencies.

"The second : That the law of October 3 be revoked *de facto*.

"The third : That there should be no political persecutions on any ground whatever, and that all kinds of hostilities should cease.

"I wish you to summon the ministers, Larès, Marin, and Tavera, in order to agree on measures to secure these three points, *without allowing the intentions which I have expressed in the first paragraph to transpire ever so little.*

"I doubt not *that you will add this fresh proof of your friendship to all those which you have before given me*, and I express beforehand my feelings of gratitude, at the same time renewing the assurance of respect and friendship with which I am your very affectionate,

"Maximilian."

A tragic chapter in an unhappy story and much sorrow to the Royal House of Hapsburg would have been saved had Maximilian refused to permit himself to be turned from his purpose. Every self-interest called him to Europe ; the health of his wife to whom he was most devotedly attached, and the dreadful possibility of being separated from her perhaps for ever should he linger ; the grave uncertainty that made the success of his endeavour to uphold his throne problematical ; the peril even of his own life.

It was not a glorious ending to an epoch of sovereignty. Austria was smarting under the blow of Sadowa, and he, a Prince of the Royal house, could only return to the fatherland with the consciousness of failure. Napoleon had sent his aide-de-camp, General Castelnau, on a mission to Mexico, to demand the Archduke's abdication. They passed on the road to Orizaba, but Maximilian refused to see the envoy. Bazaine, too, repeatedly urged him to resign the throne, anxious to "save the face" of the French Army of Intervention, the withdrawal of which he felt might be justified to Europe if the Emperor whom it was sent to uphold himself abandoned the country.

Worse than all to a man of proud spirit was the intimation plainly made by the Austrian Cabinet, anxious to avoid complications, through its Minister in Mexico, that the Archduke would be forbidden to set foot on Austrian soil if he returned to Europe bearing the title of Emperor. Everything combined to humble his pride ; besides, there was the work to which he stood committed, the lives of men who had served him, and upon whom his enemies, after his desertion of them, might take a terrible revenge.

In these circumstances Maximilian was peculiarly open to persuasion from those whom he believed to be his friends, and unfortunately at Orizaba he fell under influences which drew him to his fate. Father Fischer, an apostate Lutheran who had become a Catholic, and whose evil life was notorious, had been admitted to his confidences as the royal confessor. This German priest was deeply involved in all the plots of the Clerical Party,

and lost no opportunity of dangling before Maximilian's eyes its pretended resources. To the incitements of Father Fischer urging the Emperor to stay were added the appeals of General Márquez, who had been instrumental in calling him to the country, and also of General Miramón.

Arms and money they assured him would not be wanting if the Emperor gave himself up to the Clerical Party, undertaking to reinstate its property and honours, and again unfold the Imperial banner. Millions of piastres were darkly hinted at, which would be forthcoming from mysterious corners of the Clerical coffers for the sacred cause of Empire and Church. As a matter of fact, fifty thousand miserable pesos were all that were furnished for the campaign of Querétaro. Victory in the field, it was represented, could not be doubtful. Maximilian listened, hesitated, and after some days gave his consent. He dismissed the more liberal-minded members of his Cabinet, informing the French that he would prolong and maintain his Government with the resources of the country alone, relinquishing his journey, he turned from the coast and marched back to the capital.

A story is told on the authority of the foreign consuls at Vera Cruz,* that it was a final insult by Bazaine that determined Maximilian to show that he could defend his Empire without foreign aid. The Marshal coarsely sneered at him as the "puppet Emperor" of Napoleon, accused him of bringing about the humiliation and degradation of the French army and the disgrace of his supporters. What truth there may be in this none can tell, but it is better to give the Emperor credit for an heroic resolve.

He had still a considerable force of Austrian and Belgian volunteers who had accepted his service, and a fairly numerous following of Mexicans, although the loyalty of the latter was questionable. Of his three leading generals, Márquez—who played him false—and Miramón have been familiar figures moving among the Reactionaries in the War of Reform. Mejía—"a little ugly Indian, remarkably yellow, of about forty-five, with an enormous mouth, and over it a few black bristles representing a mous-

* "The Fall of Maximilian's Empire." By Lieut. Seaton Schroeder. This is one of several versions.

tache"—was one of the few honest, reliable men surrounding the Emperor, and deserved a better fate. A good general of cavalry, renowned for his personal bravery, it was his habit before an attack to take a lance from one of his soldiers, and rush with it amongst the first on the line of the enemy.

Some years before this Mejía had captured Querétaro from the Liberals. On his entering the city its last defender fled to the first story of the town hall. Mejía appeared in front of it, at the head of his cavalry. Lance in hand he rode up the steps, and in the large hall made the Liberals prisoners, and then rode to the balcony, welcoming with hurrahs his victorious troops.

The irrevocable step was taken. Maximilian concentrated the defenders of his Empire in the three cities of Mexico, Puebla, and Querétaro, moved the seat of his Government to the last-named town in February, 1867, and there, when the last of the French transports sailed in the following month, he awaited the onslaught of the Republican forces.

Truly a terrible position for a man to be in. He had not a real friend beside him. His wife whom he loved devotedly had gone. The country was against him. His supporter, the Emperor of the French, had deserted him. Alone, utterly alone in Mexico, after three years' struggle to maintain a crown that had been forced upon him, and which he had never really wished to take, Maximilian awaited his doom.

CHAPTER X.

NIGHT ASSAULT ON PUEBLA.

MAXIMILIAN'S Empire survived but eight weeks. Diaz dealt it one of its severest blows at Puebla.

Republicanism had been held in subjection for nearly five years, but had never been extinguished, and, relieved from the weight of foreign soldiery which had kept it down, it gathered together its forces in overwhelming strength. What little permanent effect had resulted from the attempt to graft monarchical institutions on Mexican life and character was evident from the readiness with which the country almost from end to end proclaimed its sympathy with the Juárists.

Mexico, under the rule of President Diaz, has now enjoyed unbroken peace for thirty years. What may have been its influence in remoulding the national character only time will show. But the Mexican in the tumultuous days of the last century, and in poor Maximilian's reign, was somewhat of a paradox. He flattered himself on his possession of Republican liberty, while all the time submitting to the most crushing tyranny from a succession of dictators. He gave to an exclusively military oligarchy that abrogated to itself the name of Republic, a loyal adherence which, with the Spanish ascendancy fresh in memory, he would have refused to any monarchy. Had fortune favoured Maximilian he would probably have given Mexico the true liberty, peace, and contentment to which up to that time the country had been altogether a stranger; but his short rule left no impress.

Oaxaca capitulated to General Diaz without an attempt

being made to strike an effective blow, and the whole of the South and East, as he marched through them, acknowledged the Republic. His army increased every league he advanced. Only six months before he had with difficulty counted his few hundred men, and now his following of zealous Republicans was to be numbered in thousands.

Juárez meanwhile pressed back upon the capital from the north, and the entire country fell into his hands. General Escobedo, the General-in-Chief of the Army of the North, with a force now fifteen thousand strong, on February 1st, met Miramón, Maximilian's general, at San Jacinto. Inflicting a decisive defeat upon him, he drove him back to Querétaro, and himself hastened to begin the siege of that city. Diaz, as General-in-Chief of the Army of the South, made his objective Mexico City, delivering his first attack on Puebla, where the Mexican General Noriega had thrown up defences and prepared to hold the town on behalf of Maximilian.

Diaz was familiar with every inch of the ground and every building, for twice he had himself defended Puebla ; first, when the French, immediately after entering the country, were driven off and his own brilliant work on that day gained for him promotion to the rank of general ; and again a year later, when after an heroic resistance on the part of the garrison he was himself made prisoner. His intimate knowledge of the place proved of immense advantage when perfecting his plans.

All was ready for the grand assault on April 2nd, 1867.

The attack was delivered at dead of night. Diaz threw his whole force upon the town, and by an impetuous rush carried positions which his adversaries, not without some apparent reason, had considered impregnable. There was terrible carnage, and in the heat of the hand-to-hand encounter little quarter was asked or given. The story is one of the most stirring among the records of battles in which Mexico's troubled history is so plentiful. It has never before been made public by the victorious general, whose words, which I am privileged to give, have greater weight than could attach to any description at second-hand.

"I had decided," General Diaz says, "to storm the city, and in order that the freedom of the assailing columns might be as little impeded as possible began to detach the sick, wounded, and baggage on the road to Tehuacán, with the object of placing them in safety in case the assault did not succeed; but I did this without divulging the plan to anybody. This preliminary work was interpreted by friends and foes alike as preparation for a retreat towards Tehuacán and Oaxaca.

"I was careful to allow no indication of my intention of attack to be perceived, and in fact, nothing whatever was known of the plan until the night of April 1st; for if my soldiers had suspected what was going on they might, by revealing the secret, have spoilt everything. Had the enemy been prepared, the sacrifice of life that the assault entailed would have been useless.

"When it was impossible to maintain secrecy any longer, and the moment for action was at hand, I communicated the plan to Don Ignacio Alatorre, the quartermaster, and ordered him to call together all the leaders whom I wished to command the various columns. This meeting was held in a house in the centre of the lines, so that each leader had not far to come from the place where he was in charge. The quartermaster and I went carefully over the plan of the town with every officer, explaining the operations to be carried out, arranging the force of each assaulting column, the entrenchments each must seize, and the walls or doors they must break through to make their way into the city.

"No column was to appear at a distance of more than a hundred metres from the entrenchment it was about to attack, and some were to remain concealed until within fifty metres. Such had formerly been our plans of approach.

"The area enclosed by the Imperial entrenchments was of an elliptical form, the largest diameter extending from north to south. The Convent del Carmen was one of the most distant points from the plaza in the defended zone. This gave me the idea of a false attack upon it, calling the enemy's attention away, and thus enticing the larger part of his forces and the reserves to rush to its defence.

"I decided on the formation of seventeen assaulting columns, with the intention of employing three of them in this false attack on El Carmen. With this object, as soon as night came I withdrew all the artillery along our line of approach, and posted the guns before the entrenchments of El Carmen, the fire from which faced south.

"Each column consisted, on an average, of one hundred and forty men."

General Diaz then describes the disposition of the different columns for the assault, which cannot with advantage be reproduced without the aid of a map. The artillery consisted of siege-guns, field-pieces, and mountain guns. These were at some risk brought within easy range of the defences which had to be won at El Carmen.

"The enemy," he continues, "had made the serious mistake of not protecting their trenches from the rear; a fault by which I intended to profit. So far as the nature of the ground permitted, each attack on a trench was so arranged that shots passing over the trench under attack should fall into the trenches on the opposite side of the defences, picking off from the rear the men who would be hotly engaged by our forces in front. These stray shots, coming unexpectedly in the middle of the night, evidently gave those who were wounded from behind the idea that the Republicans had broken through their rear defences.

"The three columns that were to deliver the false attack were collected near the artillery, taking advantage of cover which protected them from the Imperialists' fire.

"The remaining fourteen columns were assembled in the respective places from which each was to make its advance. I had a long line suspended from a wire, which ran from turret to turret of the church on the hill of San Juan, and reached to the ground. This line was saturated with oil, and was to be lighted when I gave the order as a signal to all the leaders of the assaulting columns to charge simultaneously.

"The peril of the assault was made all the greater by the fact that the enemy's trenches, for the most part thrown up

in front of buildings, were protected by rifle-fire from roofs and balconies, and even from holes pierced in the walls. In order to minimise as far as possible our losses from this cause I formed a Legion of Honour, composed of officers and men who had no place in the general attack, and, obtaining such ladders as were available, entrusted them with the task of climbing walls and balconies, and scattering confusion among the defenders of the houses.

"When night came, I forbade firing at any point of the lines except in the case of a sortie by the enemy.

"This silence, which was soon perceived by the Imperialists, and the fact that General Márquez, who had broken out from Querétaro, was about twelve leagues behind us, coupled with the removal of our baggage in the afternoon, must have made the enemy think we were retreating that very night, and were even then evacuating the lines.

"All having been arranged, I stationed myself close to the old 'Alameda' (garden), at a point from which I could watch the operations of some of the assaulting columns and also of the three that were to execute the false attack.

"Such was my scarcity of ammunition that at the last moment I had to collect powder from the cavalry for the storming parties, telling the former that if they were brought into action they must fight with their lances and sabres alone. The mounted force was awaiting orders on the south, facing the hills, and so could serve me in any event, even that of a retreat."

At a quarter to three in the morning the guns placed opposite El Carmen were suddenly discharged, and directly after the columns which were to make the false attack advanced. They were met with a heavy fire, and the Imperialists, just as Diaz had anticipated, hurried up their reserves from the plaza to reinforce the position. The fight here was at its hottest when the signal flare blazed from the church of San Juan, and the assailing columns simultaneously threw themselves on the city at fourteen different points.

All over Puebla the furious tumult of the onslaught resounded.

Every street, almost every window, was lighted with the flashes of rifles; the defenders seeking cover, the assailants pressing on, taking advantage of such shelter as they could find and firing in all directions; and amid the din the deeper note of the cannon continued to be heard. Beautiful tiles, loosened by the concussion, fell from the church domes, gloriously coloured glass windows were shattered, figures of the saints fell from their niches, and the whole town seemed to tremble with the force of the attack, carried out before dawn near the close of a dark night.

The assault on El Carmen, at first beaten back, was renewed with redoubled vigour, and with an irresistible rush the storming parties swarmed over the trenches and carried all before them.

Such work could not last long.

"Within a quarter of an hour," Diaz says, "only the Cathedral towers, the heights of San Agustin, and El Carmen remained defended. The Imperialists on the hills, who not only had not suffered attack themselves but had been reinforced by most of the refugees from the city, directed a sharp artillery fire on the assailants, chiefly over those streets in which they could see my soldiers were massed.

"Before reaching the trenches our men had to rush through a perfect deluge of fire issuing from low windows, perforated walls, balconies and house-roofs, with the fire from the trench they were approaching all the while before them."

Just as the Republican columns were making their triumphant entry into the plaza, General Diaz, whose plans had thus been brilliantly accomplished, arrived, and was enthusiastically greeted. For him this was indeed an hour of triumph. Immediately after the victory was complete, he issued a proclamation to his worn and tired troops, in terms calculated still further to raise their martial spirit:

"The General-in-Chief of the Eastern Army to his victorious troops in Peubla:

"Companions in arms,

"I wish to be the first in paying tribute to your heroism. The entire nation and posterity will afterwards perpetuate your glory.

"You have inscribed another memorable date in the history of the city where Zaragoza immortalised his name on the 5th of May. The 2nd of April, 1867, will henceforth be registered in the calendar of our national glories.

"I centred great hopes in you; I have seen you come forth without arms at your country's call, to arm yourselves in Miahuatlán and in La Carbonera, in Jalapa and in Oaxaca, with the weapons wrested from the enemy. You have fought naked and hungry, leaving behind you a track of glory; yet knowing all this your deeds in Puebla have surpassed my hopes.

"A city not without reason considered invincible, and which the first soldiers in the world could not take by assault, yielded to one dash of your courage. The entire garrison and the immense war material gathered by the enemy are the trophy of your victory.

"Soldiers! you deserve well of your country. The struggle which rent her cannot be further prolonged. You have given proof of your irresistible valour. Who will dare measure arms with the victors of Puebla? Independence and Republican institutions will waver no longer. A country that has sons like you will be safe from all conquest and oppression.

"Intrepid in battle and moderate in victory, you have won the admiration of this city for your bravery, and its gratitude for your discipline.

"Who is the General that will not be proud to lead you? While you are with me your friend will deem himself invincible.

"PORFIRIO DIAZ."

These were stirring words, uttered with all the enthusiasm of a man who had just gained a notable victory. To Juárez, now established at San Luis Potosí, Diaz reports the battle in this letter to the Minister of War:

"Republican Army, Eastern Line.

"GENERAL-IN-CHIEF,—

"We have just taken this place by storm, including the Convent del Carmen and other fortified posts which the enemy held in the town, taking from him a numerous train of artillery

and abundant stores of ammunition. Don Mariano Trujeque, Don Febronio Quijano, and some twenty other treacherous chiefs and officers were made prisoners and shot according to law.

"Part of the enemy's garrison has taken refuge in fortified positions in the hills of Guadalupe and Loreto, waiting for help from Don Leonardo Márquez, who, according to reports by my scouts, spent last night in San Nicolás with a division of three or four thousand men and twenty guns. I cannot yet say what operations I shall next undertake, but I think I can assure you that the enemy will surrender, and that Márquez will be beaten if he does not retreat on learning of the reverses that his accomplices have suffered.

"In either case I shall soon be in a position to aid the Army of the North, or to undertake operations against Mexico City, as you think fit.

"Kindly notify this intelligence to the President of the Republic, with my respects.

"INDEPENDENCE AND THE REPUBLIC.

"Puebla de Zaragoza, April 2nd, 1867.

(Signed) "PORFIRIO DIAZ."

The trophies of the victory consisted of sixty mounted cannon, a hundred and thirty unmounted guns and guns in store; six thousand rifles, many thousand rounds of cartridges, a magazine of powder—of which Diaz' army was sadly in want—and stores, clothing, and baggage. One of these French rifles General Diaz still keeps in his private armoury as a reminder of the famous day when he took Puebla, and handles with reverence as he relates the story of the siege.

Even the assault and capture of Puebla did not bring rest to this busy soldier. In a passage already quoted he has mentioned the approach of his old antagonist Márquez, who had been sent out by Maximilian to Mexico City to secure reinforcements for the besieged army in Querétaro in its grave need, but, treacherous as ever, was for his own ends attempting the relief of Puebla, the chief arsenal from which the Imperialists

obtained their arms and supplies. The town, however, with all its stores—so invaluable to the Republicans at that time—had been taken some days before he could come up.

The destruction of Márquez, could it have been accomplished, would have been a further blow to the Imperialists. General Diaz' duty was plain. His men were exhausted and sadly needed rest, but the situation called for a supreme effort, and leaving his wounded and a small garrison in Puebla he moved out with the cavalry, giving orders for the infantry and artillery to follow at their ordinary marching rate. On the 5th, Márquez' advanced cavalry was met and repulsed, and the same night the Republican infantry arrived. Thus began the running fight known as the battle of San Lorenzo.

General Diaz writes in his diary:

"During the night of April 6th, the enemy secretly made a circuitous march so that they might reach Guadalupe without touching Tlaxcala. My obvious course was to march direct to Tlaxcala, to cut them off in the Pass of Tortolitas.

"When I arrived at this Pass on the 7th it was already night, and the enemy had reached Guadalupe. It was not yet dawn when I continued my march, but Márquez had started at midnight, leaving behind those who were wounded in the cavalry engagement on the 5th."

Battle was refused, and the retreat of the Imperialists, orderly at the outset, soon became a rout.

Just before Diaz was getting into the saddle again for an early start, Colonel Lalanne came to him to report that on a neighbouring hill he had four hundred Republican horse and six hundred infantry, which he had raised in the State of Mexico. Diaz ordered him to do all in his power to check the march of the Imperialists, if only temporarily, until he could himself catch them up.

"Colonel Lalanne," says Diaz, "obeyed my orders but sacrificed his force. He was almost completely defeated, but owing to his valour I was able, on the 8th, to reach the enemy,

whose leader only sent his cavalry to meet us, thinking that this time, as before, I had nothing but mounted troops.

" Márquez' cavalry was sharply repulsed.

" Towards the close of the 9th, one of the adjutants under General Guadarrama came to me bringing offers of service from that General, with some four thousand horse. I had not hitherto known of the arrival of this force. I ordered the General to attempt the investment of the enemy by barring his retreat on the south and west, while we held him on the east of the hacienda ; but Márquez observed this at once, and in the early morning sent out some of his forces through a space that Guadarrama had not yet covered. This caused some alarm among Guadarrama's troops, and the Imperialist leader, who was doubtless observing the result of his stratagem, took advantage of the incident to sally out on the opposite side towards San Cristóbal.

" When I learnt this, I sent word to the citizens of Calpulalpam, who were friendly to the Republic, to destroy the bridge of San Cristóbal, the only passage possible for the enemy's troops. But on account of its size my agents had not time to destroy it completely, although they tore up the floor, leaving the beams uncovered. These they were trying to burn when the Imperialists arrived.

" At the same time that orders were given for the destruction of the bridge I advanced rapidly with the cavalry towards General Márquez. On the road Colonel Lalanne and General Guadarrama joined me. I had previously given orders that the whole army should follow.

" Márquez, learning that the bridge was useless, promptly ordered his engineers to repair it, which in any circumstances would have been a difficult task. They, however, thoughtlessly led the cart carrying their utensils on to the bare beams of which I have spoken. The feet of the mules and the cart wheels, slipping into the spaces between the beams, stuck there, blocking up the way while the infantry and cavalry filed along the sides confused and in disorder. This completed the obstruction of the enemy's baggage-train.

"In these critical circumstances, Márquez ordered all his artillery, with the exception of two mountain guns, to be thrown into the ravine, which is here very deep.

"Our infantry was already within range, and had opened fire. Márquez thought to detain us in the narrow passage, and with this object arranged his men in lines of defence on the other side of the ravine; but once we began to fight him seriously he fled, leaving some two thousand foot soldiers as prisoners.

"We followed in pursuit all that day towards Texcoco, incurring some casualties ourselves, but still further reducing the strength of the enemy. In the Blanca hacienda the fugitives made a supreme effort and caused us some losses."

For thirty miles the running fight was maintained, and nineteen cannon and upwards of two thousand prisoners were taken, the Imperialists further suffering considerable loss in dead and wounded.

The remnants of Márquez' force entered Mexico City on the morning of April 12th. Their chief had been there since the preceding day. Lost to all sense of shame, he had abandoned his army, and with a few officers been first in the flight. At once taking upon himself dictatorial powers, he arranged for the defence of the city, giving short shrift to any one who opposed his imperious will.

"My men," Diaz writes, "had become so fatigued after the day and night of the 10th—their numbers preventing their obtaining any provisions by the way, as there were few houses —that it seemed unwise for me to continue the advance, and I ordered only one General, who knew the locality, to follow the Imperialists with his cavalry. The pursuit continued all that night and part of the next day, as far as the suburbs of the capital, with help from our sympathisers among the people, who ran ahead and destroyed the bridges, thus obliging the enemy's cavalry to cross almost inaccessible places, where few could keep in the saddle under the fire of our pursuing forces.

"Once in Texcoco, I ordered all the troops who were still

on the march to encamp in brigades wherever they happened to be at dusk, and to continue their march next day and join me."

It was in Mexico City, the present capital of the Republic and its historical seat of government, that the last embers of Imperial rule were finally extinguished. In the early weeks of the investment, however, it was not here that the attention of the Old and the New World was rivetted, but upon Querétaro, where Maximilian was cooped in and fighting against fate.

Perhaps it will be best if I continue in this place the narrative of the siege of the capital down to the fall of Querétaro, leaving the hapless Maximilian's tragic end for another chapter. In that grim episode Diaz himself had no actual part; he remained before Mexico City, never leaving it, and received its capitulation forty-eight hours after Maximilian had been shot.

General Diaz has fortunately dealt somewhat fully in his notes with incidents of the siege of Mexico City. What he has to tell of the various overtures made to him at this time with a view to saving Maximilian, to which I shall come later, is of historical value. These first few pages are purely military. They commence with the date April 13th, 1867:

"On approaching Mexico City I took as my base of operations for the advance on the town the terraces formed by the banks of the river. Thus I occupied all the land facing west, from the ranch of Santa Tomás nearly to Chapultepec. I first established my headquarters in the village of Guadalupe (of saintly fame), and in May I passed on to Tacubaya, where I stayed until the taking of the city.

"General Guadarrama, who had done me such good service with his cavalry in the attack at San Lorenzo and the pursuit of Márquez to Texcoco, received orders from the head-quarters of the Army of the North to concentrate his forces on Querétaro. This compelled me to put off for a few days the complete investment of the capital, and I could do no more than post forces, now separated from one another, in positions from which they could easily be united to resist a sortie.

"General Guadarrama had but recently left for Querétaro

with four thousand horse, and I was still prevented by lack of men from closing up the lines, when I received a letter from General Escobedo towards the close of April, 1867, telling me that he needed help from me beyond that I had already sent him. He even hinted that he would willingly place his services under my command if the supreme Government was willing, and that he had already appealed to them for such an arrangement.

"I answered General Escobedo that I would march to join him in a few days, but that I first wanted to prevent the possibility of any sortie on the enemy's part; I must also receive a sufficient supply of ammunition from Puebla to serve the two forces. It was rather a sacrifice for me to leave troops of insufficient strength round Mexico City to go and help him. An idea crossed my mind of making an immediate assault, which would, indeed, upset my plans for obliging the capital to surrender, and perhaps necessitate some sacrifice of men, for I should have to give battle although there was no urgent need for doing so.

"I therefore resolved to leave some five or six thousand men before Mexico City—a force which I regarded as sufficiently strong to prevent any movement on the part of the Imperialist troops, unless the entire garrison left the city. They must have numbered more than eight thousand soldiers, for Márquez had enrolled and armed within the city a good many residents for its defence.

"But while preparing to act as I had written to General Escobedo, I received another letter from him. In this he realised my situation, and, his own circumstances having improved, he said my services were no longer indispensable to him. I therefore continued to strengthen the positions we held before the city. General Escobedo requested that I would send him a convoy of ammunition. With this I immediately complied, and thirty loaded carts were despatched to him under escort.

"During the days that followed, troops whom I had ordered to be organised for me in some of the States were constantly

The Cathedral, Mexico City.

[*Page* 202.

Hall of the Jockey Club, Mexico City.

[*Page* 203.

arriving. Artillery also came up from Puebla, and the investment was made closer, but I was still unable to complete it. At last I equipped some canoes with mountain guns, to close the line across the lakes, and established a floating bridge from San Cristóbal to the 'Peñon de Baños' (bathing rock) with the object of communicating with the fortified post that threatened the city on the east.

"To ensure a supply of ammunition during the siege I had ordered factories to be established in Puebla and at Panzacola, and had arranged for the transport service to be extended. Most of the artillery used in the siege of Mexico City had been taken in Puebla from the Imperialists and in the pursuit of Márquez. Until then I had really possessed only twenty-six cannon.

"Puebla, before the invasion, had served as a station for convoys supplying artillery and ammunition to the army. It had continued, more or less, during the Empire to perform the same service, furnishing from its stores all arms except the cannon which the enemy possessed when I occupied the town, and which—with those from the outlying forts—numbered some eighty odd. Beyond these guns there were still more than a hundred and fifty others lying unmounted in the storehouses, which during the siege of Mexico City were fitted up and sent to me there.

"Most of the guns were of iron, and were very heavy, but in the absence of better artillery, and for fixed positions, they did good service. For the rest I counted on sufficient mountain and field guns to be able to carry on necessary operations.

"Before the city was completely surrounded the Imperialists sallied out with a considerable force and made an attack on a spot between the Agricultural School and a little farm near, 'The Ascension.' The post was defended by Colonel Telley Giron, who, however, abandoned it. I went to the spot and ordered General Cravioto, whose regiment was nearest, to follow me with a battalion of the line, and also had the Carreón brigade sent up at all speed. With Cravioto's force and my escort we were of sufficient strength to turn the enemy and make

him retreat to his trenches. In this operation we were helped by the artillery, who, at long range, were able to concentrate their fire from a considerable length of our lines.

"When General Escobedo took Querétaro on May 15th, 1867, he communicated the news to me by telegraph. I sent the information into Mexico City; but Márquez insisted on denying it, assuring his men that the Emperor Maximilian had triumphed, and that he was marching with his victorious army to their relief.

"Even the circumstance that my permission was asked to allow the Austrian defenders supplied by the Archduke Maximilian to leave the city was not regarded as sufficient evidence of the truth of our report. Márquez most cleverly distorted the information I had sent him to suit his own interests.

"The head of the Austrian and Hungarian forces among the garrison was Prince Khevenhüller. Though Márquez and his supporters denied the fact of their Sovereign's capture, the Prince entertained no doubt about it, and believed that all armed resistance would now harm Maximilian rather than be of service to him. His only object being to serve the Emperor, he notified me that he would act up to this belief and take no further part in the military operations, if, in return, I would allow him to march, together with all the officers and troops under his command and the foreign officials, to Vera Cruz, there to embark for Austria.

"I replied that I would concede his request if he would come out of the city and join me in the suburbs of Tacubaya, there handing over all his arms, ammunition, and horses; and that, in exchange I would furnish him with money and vehicles for his journey and embarkation at Vera Cruz. He told me that this was impossible, but that he would shut himself up with all his force in the National Palace as soon as any combat commenced, and would raise the white flag and keep aloof from the fighting. He hoped that for his conduct I would grant him adequate consideration, his principal object, he said, being not to make the Emperor's situation more difficult.

"Among those who came to our lines was Baron von Lago

an envoy from Austria. I had a conversation with him, in which he corroborated what I had already learnt from Prince Khevenhüller, that the Austrian soldiers who were in the city believed that once Maximilian was captured their mission was at an end, and that in order not to prejudice the fate of their Sovereign they proposed to take no further part in the military proceedings in Mexico.

"I confined myself to hearing what Baron von Lago said, without giving him any reply, or making any promise."

Hunger within the besieged city, the weakening of its defence by the withdrawal of the Austrians from the fighting ranks, and the demoralisation due to the uncertainty with which the progress of events at Querétaro was enshrouded, were beginning to do their work. But there was still a good deal of fight left in the band of desperate men who flew the Imperial banner over the capital even after the Emperor himself could uphold it no longer. Fruitless attacks were made on the besiegers' lines, only to be beaten back in every case. The most formidable of these was led by Márquez in person during the last days of the siege—"probably," says Diaz, who knew his character well, "with the object of abandoning the city, and saving his remaining forces, which, even in his present difficult circumstances, he could have considerably increased, as he had an abundant supply of arms and ammunition."

Amidst the Republican triumph there was still a sufficient element of disorder in the country to have given this unscrupulous and scheming adventurer a following, with a chance of further prolonging his nefarious career. Márquez had shown himself a traitor to most of the causes he espoused, and it is pretty certain that attachment to Maximilian's fortunes would not have been permitted to stand in his way where his own self-interest was involved.

The sortie by the garrison was made in the direction of La Piedad. It is the last bit of actual fighting recorded by General Diaz in his diary; although his notes continue to deal fully with other subjects:

"One morning in the beginning of June, when I was at headquarters in Tacubaya, we heard artillery firing nearly all along the enemy's lines. A sharp fusillade came from the fortified posts in La Piedad and the neighbourhood, as well as on the Cuartos bridge. I rode out immediately with my staff and escort towards the bridge. Near La Condesa we met Colonel Don Venancio Leyva on the road, who informed me that the bridge had been forced and his battalion destroyed.

"This occurred near the camp of General Terán, who was commanding the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd battalions of the Oaxaca Lancers. I at once took command of the first battalion, and sent them at full gallop towards the bridge, which was by this time almost in the enemy's power. Fortunately, a part of Colonel Leyva's battalion, which he had thought completely destroyed, was still making a last stand, and their resistance became more vigorous when the men saw that I was advancing, and already in action.

"Before hastening into the firing line I left orders with General Terán to form the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the Oaxacan troops into column, and follow after us at a moderate speed, so that they would not arrive in an exhausted condition. I had also sent orders to General Naranjo to bring up his Cavalry Division from Los Morales, and to my brother, General Félix Diaz, who was with his division in the suburb of Coyoacán, to march to the spot whither I was proceeding.

"These forces I decided ultimately to keep in reserve, and not to expose them to the enemy's fire, for, in the existing circumstances at the bridge I believed that, with the single battalion under my command, we should be able to compel the Imperialists to retreat. I charged, and—as I had anticipated—they retired to their former positions.

"The artillery, with which our line was well-equipped on this occasion, worked havoc upon Márquez' columns, which returned to the city with great difficulty. Their only means of access was by the one bridge over which the sortie had been effected. In the narrow way there was great confusion and a block of men and horses, upon which our infantry poured a deadly fire.

View of Guadalupe.

[*Page* 206.

Virgin of Guadalupe, patron saint of Mexico, as she appeared miraculously on the Indian's tilma, 1531. Now above altar.

[*Page* 207.

"The ground between the Cuartos Bridge and La Piedad was covered with dead and dying. I tried to pick up the wounded, but on my ambulances going out they were fired upon from the enemy's trenches, and some bearers were injured or killed. I was thus compelled to desist from the attempt, which was made solely for the sake of the wounded, whom the Imperialists would neither take away themselves nor allow me to help. These poor fellows were completely abandoned for many days until they died from exposure, and for want of medical aid."

Guadalupe, where General Diaz has told us he first established his headquarters, is more than a village; it is the Holy of Holies of Mexico. When the rigours of the siege slackened, many of his men took opportunity to slip away and pray at the famous shrine, renowned not only in Mexico but throughout the whole world. Every Catholic has heard of the Patron Saint of Guadalupe.

Centuries ago the place had been a great Aztec stronghold. Up to the year 1531, the country had been pagan; the Aztecs practised human sacrifice, but after Juan Diego saw the vision of the Virgin in December of that year, all was changed.

Juan Diego was a peasant, living in Tolpetlac. One Sunday morning as he approached the hill of Tepeyacac—now Guadalupe—his attention was attracted by singing, which he felt must be the singing of angels. Raising his eyes to the rocks, he beheld a lovely vision of a lady encircled by a halo of light, who bade him tell the bishop it was her wish that a great temple should be built on the hill, to her honour.

The bishop, incredulous, demanded proof before considering the matter. Juan returned to the hill, where the lady reappeared and told him to go back to the bishop. Still his reverence would give no credence to the story. The lady again appeared to Juan, and promised proof the next day. But when morning came Juan's uncle was dangerously ill with fever, and his return to the trysting-place was deferred to the following day. Then the lady appeared to him as he was on a mission to seek a confessor to go to the sick man. She assured him his

uncle was "quite well again," and as he knelt before her she bade him cut some flowers.

Till that moment flowers had never grown on the barren hill, but to the Indian's astonishment he instantly saw them blooming all around. He picked a quantity, which she requested him to take to the bishop as her sign. Until he had done so, no other eyes were to look upon her offering. He wrapped his fragrant treasures in the blanket, or "tilma," which every Indian wears, and set off once more for the bishop's palace. When Juan unfolded his tilma before the ecclesiastic, upon the cloth was miraculously printed the face of the Virgin.

That picture exists to this day, carefully guarded in the Cathedral of Guadalupe. The Patron Saint is depicted in a blue robe, with a skirt of a soft pink shade; the colours are subdued yet warm. She has a halo all round her.

By February, 1532, a temple had, as directed, been built upon the spot, and Juan Diego and his uncle Bernadino became the servants of the Virgin.

Thousands of Indian pilgrims gather together every year to do honour to their Patron Saint, and the Guadalupe Festival is far more famous in Mexico than even the pilgrimage to Lourdes in Europe. Indeed, there is much in common between the French miracle enacted three hundred years later and that of the Lady of Guadalupe.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EMPEROR'S DEATH.

THE four most important persons in the history of Mexico at this time were scattered.

Diaz was on the eve of taking Mexico City, a great stroke for the Republicans. Juárez, the President, was away in the north. Carlota was in Europe, where she had been pleading Maximilian's cause. The Emperor himself was shut up in Querétaro, waiting eagerly both for further news of his wife, and help from his former supporters.

How he must have rued the day he ever set foot on Mexican soil; three long years of disasters in which he had never known the joys of peace of mind, or not been dogged by constant care.

A man less devoted would have blamed his wife, for she it was, as we know, who urged him to accept an Imperial crown; but his love for her remained strong as ever through all these years of trial, as will be seen at the end of this chapter in his own words.

Besieged in Querétaro by the army under General Escobedo, now numbering some twenty thousand men, Maximilian maintained its defence from March 12th, 1867, to the 15th of May. Swiftly the lines of investment manned by the exultant Republicans closed around him. The city was an unfortunate choice for his last stand, and a poor strategical position. The hapless Emperor afterwards called it "a mouse-trap," and so, indeed, it proved.

General Mejía had brought the troops of the Third Division of the Imperial army, formerly operating in the north, into the city. General Miramón, after his defeat at San Jacinto,

retired with the survivors of his force upon Querétaro, and thus helped to swell the numbers of its defenders. These two generals, gallant soldiers both, whose military reputations throughout the conflict remained untarnished, stood by Maximilian to the last, and laid down their lives for the cause they had espoused.

The garrison consisted of nine thousand men, with thirty-nine guns. They fought bravely and stubbornly. The defence was distinguished by a series of brilliant sorties. The results of one of these, led by Márquez, who had entered Querétaro as General-in-Chief of the entire forces, and had taken the first favourable opportunity to get out of it, we have seen. His withdrawal further weakened a position which had already become difficult to maintain.

Maximilian, confronted by his adversaries on every side, displayed great bravery and fortitude during the harassing days of the siege.

Friends within the country and beyond its borders made many attempts, when the triumph of the Republicans was seen to be inevitable, to effect some arrangement by which Maximilian should be allowed to renounce further pretensions to his throne and to retire in safety to Europe. General Escobedo had no authority from Juárez save to accept the Emperor's submission. Sympathisers who sought to intervene were told that the time had not arrived for negotiations.

Overtures to this end were made to General Diaz while his army was extended before Mexico City. Within the gradually-narrowing circle of steel which he maintained around the old capital were two active adherents of the unfortunate Emperor, Father Fischer, the German priest who had enjoyed many favours from him, and the Princess Felix Salm-Salm. This lady, of unusual height and commanding manners, whose husband was afterwards held a prisoner with Maximilian, was unremitting in her efforts to save the Emperor.

"About the 18th of April," General Diaz writes, "before the investment of Mexico City was complete, Father Fischer, the personal secretary of Maximilian, came out to see me, and I

received him in the farm of Los Morales. He proposed to me that the Emperor should abdicate, on condition that he was allowed to leave the country without any responsibility for all that had occurred during the period of his rule. I answered this by sending Father Fischer back at once to the city, telling him that I had no power to enter into such arrangements.

"I then reported the matter to the Supreme Government.

"Some days afterwards the Princess Felix Salm-Salm, a lady from the United States, who had married an Austrian officer in the service of Maximilian, came out of the city with similar proposals to those made by the priest, although she was less exacting, and added that when once consent to the arrangement had been given, the foreign forces directly under Maximilian's orders would cease to take any further part in the military affairs of the country. My reply to the first proposal of the Princess was much the same as that given to Fischer. Without waiting to ascertain whether or not she was authorised to add the second proposal, which it was impossible to accept or even to take seriously, I ordered the Princess to return to Mexico City, and directed an escort to accompany her as far as the enemy's lines."

Diaz had already, in fact, refused other negotiations, which began to reach him even before his army arrived in front of Mexico City. A suggestion of a prettily conceived plot is contained in this passage from his records of the time :

"On my march from Texcoco to the village of Guadalupe, Señora Donna Luciana Arrazola de Baz came to me from Mexico City. She was the wife of Don Juan José de Baz, who was with me. She told me that General Nicolás Portilla, who was at that time Minister of War for the Emperor, had commissioned her to offer me an entry into the capital on condition that some concessions were made to him, to the Mexican officers of the Imperialist army, and to certain ministers. The first aim sought by Portilla, she added, was a union between the two armies, with the intention that, when united and reciprocally recognising the positions that the officers on each side held, they should together proceed to establish a new order of things, which should

be neither the so-called Empire of Maximilian nor the Constitutional Government of Señor Juárez.

"Of course I put aside the extravagant proposals and would not look at them, even in their most favourable light, which was that of our uncontested entry into the city."

Señora de Baz, who pluckily undertook this somewhat delicate mission, was a lady noted for her Republican enthusiasm and personal courage—qualities which no doubt explain her selection as envoy. This was by no means the first offer that Diaz had received of a bribe to throw over Benito Juárez and the national cause to which they were jointly pledged; he had indignantly rejected all of them without a moment's consideration.

Juárez meanwhile watched the development of events from San Luis Potosí without stirring.

Querétaro fell on May 15th, the end being hastened by an act of treachery. The Emperor had presided over a council of war only the previous day, when it had been intended that the entire garrison should make an attempt to break through the lines of the besiegers. The sortie was postponed for twenty-four hours. That same night Colonel Miguel López, a member of the Emperor's staff, went over to the enemy, and before daybreak admitted the Republicans to the city.

Maximilian was roused from his sleep in the Convent de La Cruz, and advised to fly for his life. He hastened out in the grey dawn, and found everything in confusion, for a general assault on the city had already begun. General Escobedo, having borne down a part of the defences, poured his troops into the town. The Imperialists, trapped and surprised, stood at bay, many hesitating, others fighting furiously with their backs to the wall. Miramón early in the encounter was wounded by a bullet in the face.

López' treachery has been the subject of acrimonious controversy, but it is plain that, while delivering over the city, it was not intended to capture the Emperor, but to give him time to escape. Many officers acquainted with the facts survive. It was a brother of General Pedro Rincón Gallardo,

now the Mexican Minister in London—a delightful veteran, with all the courtly manners of the blue blood of Spain—who led the first party of Republicans into the city, and the Minister himself followed with the cavalry and saw all that took place.

The result of the interview between López and General Escobedo was that the Convent de La Cruz, which Maximilian had made his headquarters, should be attacked that same night. At midnight, accordingly, a column was formed for the assault by General Francisco Velez, who commanded the line. Colonel José M. Rincón Gallardo was placed at its head, and his instructions were that at 2 a.m. a person would come out of the enemy's trenches, that he should go forward to meet him, and should execute all the orders that this man might give him.

At the hour named this person, who proved to be Colonel Miguel López, appeared as arranged, and told Colonel Rincón Gallardo to advance with him, and to order twenty of his men to follow at a short distance. The Republican, being suspicious, took López by the arm, keeping his pistol at full cock. In this way they entered the cemetery attached to the Convent de La Cruz through a breach made by the artillery a few days before. López had been given command of all this line, and his troops, whose arms were piled at the time, on seeing their commander were put off their guard.

Immediately afterwards the entire Republican column swarmed through the breach, making prisoners of the Imperialist soldiers at the cemetery before they had realised what was happening. La Cruz itself was taken, without any resistance.

Besides the chief or principal staircase, there was another in the second court-yard by which the Emperor descended from his room. In this second courtyard he mounted his horse, and accompanied by General Castillo, who was in uniform, and with his full staff, he directed his way to the street, having to pass through the enemy's troops in order to go out by the chief gate of the Convent, when he found his passage barred by the Republican soldiers. López thereupon called to their commander, "The Emperor! Give orders that they let him pass." "*Que*

passen, son paisanos" (Let them pass, they are citizens), said Colonel José Rincón Gallardo, and the men stood aside. His explicit orders from General Escobedo had been to obey López.

Maximilian refused to fly. He summoned Miramón and Mejía, and sent orders for as many troops as possible to be assembled on the Cerro de las Campanos, and for the place to be defended. When dense masses of infantry approached, he had the mortification of seeing his own troops go over to the enemy, while others were taken prisoners.

Thrice the Emperor consulted Mejía as to the possibility of cutting a way out, but the stoical Indian at his side declared it to be useless to attempt it.

Much blood had been shed before Maximilian realised the utter hopelessness of his position. He was many times fired upon, but remained unscathed.

Seizing a handkerchief he tied it to his riding-whip as a flag of truce, and started down the slope of the Cerro de las Campanos, where he was confronted by Colonel Green. This officer, a Canadian by birth, who was a smart, well-preserved man of about sixty when I met him in Mexico, described to me how the Emperor's surrender was effected. Colonel Green was the only British officer fighting for Juárez and the Republicans. Originally an artist travelling in Mexico, he had been drawn into the whirlpool of Mexican life, and after some adventurous years was commanding before Querétaro a band of volunteers he had raised. Though a Briton in appearance, he is thoroughly Mexican in sentiment.

"Maximilian was disheartened," said the colonel, "and nervous. His lips were trembling; he looked ill and wan, but withal showed himself a noble and gallant soldier."

"I surrender," he murmured.

"You must surrender to General Escobedo."

"No, no, not to him—to you, or to General Corona!"

"Calm yourself," replied the colonel; "I have a letter from my brother at Washington in my pocket, and he tells me the American Government has interceded for your life."

These words came as a great relief to the unfortunate Em-

peror, and a flash of joy illumined his face, but it was only momentary.

By this time General Corona, a good-looking officer, who was afterwards Minister in Madrid, and then the leader of the Army of the West, had arrived. Standing aside, Colonel Green beckoned to Maximilian to surrender formally to his superior officer.

"I am Maximilian, Emperor of Mexico," he pulled himself together sufficiently to say, as he presented his sword to Corona, standing beside whom was General Riva Rincón Palacio.

"You are a Mexican citizen and my prisoner," was the stern reply of his captor.

The Mexican Empire, conceived by Louis Napoleon for the furtherance of schemes designed for his own aggrandisement, in which the welfare of the nation had no part, and constructed over the graves of thousands of French soldiers, was at an end. A deluge of blood had swept over the country before Maximilian's unstable throne was established. The Emperor had striven to bring peace, but fate decided that during his brief rule he should be engaged in unceasing warfare. The long and bitter conflict of five years, commencing with the French Intervention, had drained the country of its manhood. There was not a family in Mexico, rich or poor, but mourned the loss of a father or son by death, captivity, or exile.

The blow shook Napoleon's throne in Europe. From the collapse of the Mexican enterprise dated the growing discontent with his *régime* and suspicion of his aims which had its sequel three years later in the train of disasters that attended the Franco-German war. It had driven poor Carlota into madness. The tragic drama was now to claim its last victim, Maximilian himself.

After his surrender Maximilian was taken back to his quarters at the Convent de La Cruz. Sentries were posted, and a guard was even placed in his room. An hour or two later the fallen Emperor asked to be permitted to see the brothers Gallardo, and when they appeared he took them out on a little flat roof, or balcony, adjoining the apartment.

"One of you allowed me to pass to-day in the Convent de La Cruz," he said.

Colonel José Gallardo replied that it was he, whereupon Maximilian thanked him and declared that he had asked them to come because he thought they would have great influence in the Republican Army. They ought, he said, to use that influence so that no more blood should be shed, and if it was considered necessary he desired that his—the Emperor's—should be the last. He requested them to spare no effort to save the lives of his generals, mentioning especially Miramón, their own intimate friend.

General Rincón Gallardo tells me that Maximilian was looking pale and ill, and was suffering from dysentery. The room was littered with books. When they entered the Emperor was standing by the bed, and stepped forward to greet them in excellent Spanish. He wore the uniform in which he had surrendered, a blue tunic with gold buttons engraved with the Mexican eagle, blue trousers with a gold stripe, and high Wellington boots. On parting he shook hands with great affability. They were greatly impressed by his calm dignity.

Later the Emperor was removed to a bare apartment at the Convent of Las Teresitas, which remained his prison. Mejía and Miramón, his chief generals, were incarcerated near him. The three were summoned to attend before a court-martial constituted by Escobedo, which assembled at the Teatro de Yturbide, in the city of Querétaro, at ten o'clock on the morning of June 14th, 1867. One of the Emperor's judges was later Mexican Ambassador at Washington.

Maximilian refused to appear; though broken in health, the proud spirit of his imperial race asserted itself in the depth of his misfortunes. It is said that during the two days throughout which the trial lasted in his absence, he consoled himself by reading in his cell the history of Charles I. of England. How the pathetic story of the man who had suffered must have appealed to the man about to suffer. His defence was entrusted to eminent Mexican lawyers, with the Licentiate Mariaño Riva Palacio at their head, who did all that was possible for him.

The result had been foreseen. The Emperor, with Generals

Mejía and Miramón, was charged with treason to the State, with filibustering, and with the issue of the fateful Decree of October 3rd, under which so many Mexicans had violently suffered death. The court-martial found them guilty, and the death sentence was ordered to be carried out the next day.

Juárez postponed the executions for three days, on the urgent representations of Baron Magnus, the Prussian Minister. It had been expected by all the Emperor's friends that Europe and America would interfere, and few believed that the dread sentence would be carried out. Even before his capture the French and English Sovereigns had urged the United States to intercede on Maximilian's behalf. To all such representations Juárez replied that the laws of the Republic must be observed. There hung in the balance not only the life of an individual, but the safety of a nation.

Never had a man standing in deadly peril such illustrious sureties offered for his future conduct. "I implore you," wrote Baron Magnus to Juárez' Minister, Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, "in the name of humanity and of Heaven, not to make any further attempt against the Prince's life, and repeat how certain I am that my Sovereign, his Majesty the King of Prussia, and all the monarchs of Europe who are related to the imprisoned prince, his brother the Emperor of Austria, his cousin the Queen of Great Britain, his brother-in-law the King of the Belgians, and his cousin the Queen of Spain, as also the Kings of Italy and Sweden, will readily agree to give all possible guarantee that none of the prisoners shall ever return to Mexican territory."

All was, however, without avail. It could have been no wish of Juárez to take the Emperor's life, but owing to the death of many of their heroes who had been shot down in cold blood under Maximilian's Decree of October 3rd, the feeling among Republicans was so intense, that, had he escaped, both the Government and the Emperor would have been in peril of the fury of the populace and the army.

The position is a striking one. Probably it has never had a parallel. The Emperor of a great European State was interceding for the life of a brother, the Kings and Queens of Europe,

tied by bonds of relationship, though less close, and each of them knowing Maximilian personally and taking the keenest interest in his fate, were joining through their Ministers in the appeal. And to whom ? To Benito Juárez—Citizen Juárez—" the man in the black coat "—the calm, strong, resolute man, self-taught, self-reliant, reared in a school of hard adversity ; the unfriended Indian lad whom we have seen years before sleeping behind the counter in his master's shop.

Forty years have passed, and looking back the sentence seems harsh. From all we know of Maximilian's character he might with safety have been permitted to leave Mexico. He was not the type of man ever to have troubled the country again. But in justice to Juárez, with whom the supreme decision rested, it is necessary to recall the circumstances of the time. Mexico had been for generations the sport of one usurper after another. The country's liberties, if safe from interference by the dethroned Emperor, would yet be open to constant menace.

The example of Yturbide was remembered ; that of the ex-King of the Two Sicilies, who, when expelled from Naples, organised a government in Rome where he continued to receive recognition from Spain, was comparatively recent.

It has been frequently urged that the Decree of October 3rd, which condemned to summary execution all who opposed Maximilian in arms, alone justified the measures adopted towards its author, but there is in fact no trace of any feelings of revenge in Juárez' action. He was actuated solely by considerations for the welfare of his distracted country. No one knew so well the dangers of a perpetuation of the state of anarchy which had for so long existed within its borders. The time was not one for indecision. He delayed carrying out the sentence in order that he might not be accused of undue hastiness, but there is no evidence that his resolve at any time wavered.

Maximilian was shot on the morning of June 19th.

As the sun went down on his last day on earth he sat writing at a table in his little cell. These last letters, printed at the close of this chapter, reveal his whole soul.

Only thirty-five years of age, he was condemned to die.

What must his thoughts have been ? Tempted, cheated, deserted, treated with treachery and dishonesty, the one thing he loved on earth lost to him—for he had learnt of his wife's madness some months before—absolutely nothing lay before him. Austria had been endeared to him as his home, but he left it to please a woman he loved still more. He had fought hard to maintain the pomp and splendour he came out to create, but how miserably he had failed.

Childless, there was nobody to carry on his ruined name, either to greater depths or to raise it again to honoured heights—just he, one lone, desolate figure, waiting to meet his God.

And how did he do it ?

Nothing in his troubled career became him more than this final scene. The man who so often at a crisis in his life had shown himself weak and indecisive became strengthened and ennobled as he faced death. He was calm and composed, and his quiet dignity, maintained to the end, made an ineffaceable impression upon those who were with him in those last moments.

Maximilian rose at half-past three o'clock on that fatal morning, and made a careful toilet. At five he attended Mass with his two Generals, Miramón and Mejía, who were to suffer with him. An hour later Captain González entered his cell. Before he had yet spoken the Emperor said, " I am ready," and came out into the passage, where he was surrounded by his few servants, who, weeping, kissed his hands. " Be calm," he said to them ; " you see I am so. It is the will of God that I should die, and we cannot act against that."

To the cells of each of the generals he went in turn, said his farewells and embraced them, and then, protected by a strong escort, the melancholy little procession marched out to the sunlit street. " Ah, what a splendid day ! I always wished to die on such a day," the Emperor remarked, as he breathed the fresh air. A few hired carriages were in waiting to convey them to the place chosen for the execution, a little eminence at the foot of the slopes of the Cerro de las Campanas, known as " the Hill of the Bells."

It is quite close to the spot where Maximilian had surrendered

to the Republic. Everyone greeted the Emperor respectfully, and the women cried aloud.

Here a division of troops was drawn up, forming three sides of a hollow square. The condemned men alighted and walked with a firm step towards a low adobe wall, against which they were ranged. Maximilian refused to have his eyes bandaged, and was allowed to die looking death in the face.

The Emperor had been given the central position, with his generals on either side. He hesitated, turned to Miramón, and placed him in the middle, observing, "A brave soldier must be honoured by his monarch even in his last hour, therefore permit me to give you the place of honour."

Outside the lines of the soldiers a crowd of people had congregated. An impressive silence prevailed, broken only by the sobs of the women.

Miramón protested against the accusation that he was a traitor to his country. "I never was a traitor," he said, "and I request you not to suffer this stain to be affixed to my memory, and still less to my children. Viva Mexico! viva el Emperador!" He stood erect to receive the shot. Mejía, stoical as ever, cast an indifferent look around him.

Maximilian addressed a few burning words to the people. "Mexicans," he said, "persons of my rank and origin are destined by God either to be benefactors of the people or martyrs. Called by a great part of you, I came for the good of the country. Ambition did not bring me here; I came animated with the best wishes for the future of my adopted land, and for that of my soldiers, whom I thank, before my death, for the sacrifices they made for me. Mexicans, may my blood be the last which will be spilt for the welfare of the country; and if it should be necessary that its sons should still shed theirs, may it flow for its good, but never by treason. Viva Independence! Viva Mexico!"

As the Emperor's utterance ceased he advanced a step towards the firing party. The officer in command yelled at him, "*Atras!*" (Back). Maximilian quietly responded that his only object was to give each of the men a gold ounce (twenty pesos)

as a souvenir. He asked the men not to aim at his face, but at his heart, as he desired that, when his mortal remains were returned to Austria, his mother, the Archduchess Sophia, might be able to recognise him. Then he laid both his hands on his breast, and looked steadily before him.

Wisps of thin blue smoke curled upwards in the air, disclosing three bodies prostrate on the ground. Five shots had been fired. The Emperor had fallen on his right side, whispering slowly the word "Hombre." His body was pierced, and the wounds were deadly; but he still moved slightly. The officer in command of the firing party laid him on his back, and pointed with his sword to the heart. A soldier then stepped forward, and sent another bullet into the spot indicated. Mejía lived after the firing, and required two more bullets to despatch him.

The bodies of the two generals were handed over to their relatives, and the corpse of Maximilian was conveyed to the Convent of San Teresita, where it was embalmed. It was not, however, without difficulty that the relatives of Maximilian even recovered his remains. They now repose in the crypt of the Capuchin church at Vienna, the last resting-place of so many of the illustrious but ill-fated House of Hapsburg.

Maximilian wrote the following dignified letter to Juárez on the morning of his execution:

"Querétaro, June 19, 1867.

"Señor Don Benito Juárez,—

"Being about to meet death, as a consequence of having sought to determine whether new political institutions would put an end to the sanguinary civil wars which for so many years had torn this unfortunate country, I shall forfeit my life with pleasure if that sacrifice may contribute to the peace and prosperity of my adopted fatherland.

"Fully persuaded that no solid structure can be raised on a soil soaked with blood and convulsed by violent commotions, I implore you, in the most solemn manner, and with the sincerity natural to my present situation, that my blood may be the last shed, and that, with perseverance equal to that with which you

upheld the cause that has just triumphed—a perseverance which, in my prosperity, I took pleasure in recognising and esteeming —you will now devote yourself to the nobler task of reconciliation and of laying the firm and lasting foundations of peace and tranquillity in this unhappy land.

"MAXIMILIANO."

Nor did he forget his attorneys, who had laboured to procure his release, or at least to vindicate the rectitude of his intentions. To the Licentiate Riva Palacio he wrote :

"Capuchinas Prison, Querétaro,
"June 18, 1867.

"MY DEAR RIVA PALACIO,—

"The perseverance and energy with which I am informed you have defended my cause at San Luis Potosí, and the hardships which you have suffered in that task, in spite of your years and the delicate state of your health, require that I express to you my sincere gratitude for a service so generous and noble, which remains engraved on my heart.

"I regret that I am unable to express these sentiments to you verbally, and to entreat you in the same manner as I now do in writing, that in your prayers you will not forget,

"Your affectionate friend,
"MAXIMILIANO."

The last letter was to poor Carlota. It is short and of infinite sadness :

"Querétaro, June 18, 1867.

"MY DEARLY BELOVED CARLOTA,—

"If one day God permits you to recover and you read these lines, you will learn the cruelty of the ill-fortune which has increasingly pursued me since your departure for Europe. You took with you all my soul. So many events and so many sudden blows have broken all my hopes, that death is for me a happy deliverance and not an agony. I fall gloriously as a soldier, as a king ; vanquished but not dishonoured. If your sufferings be

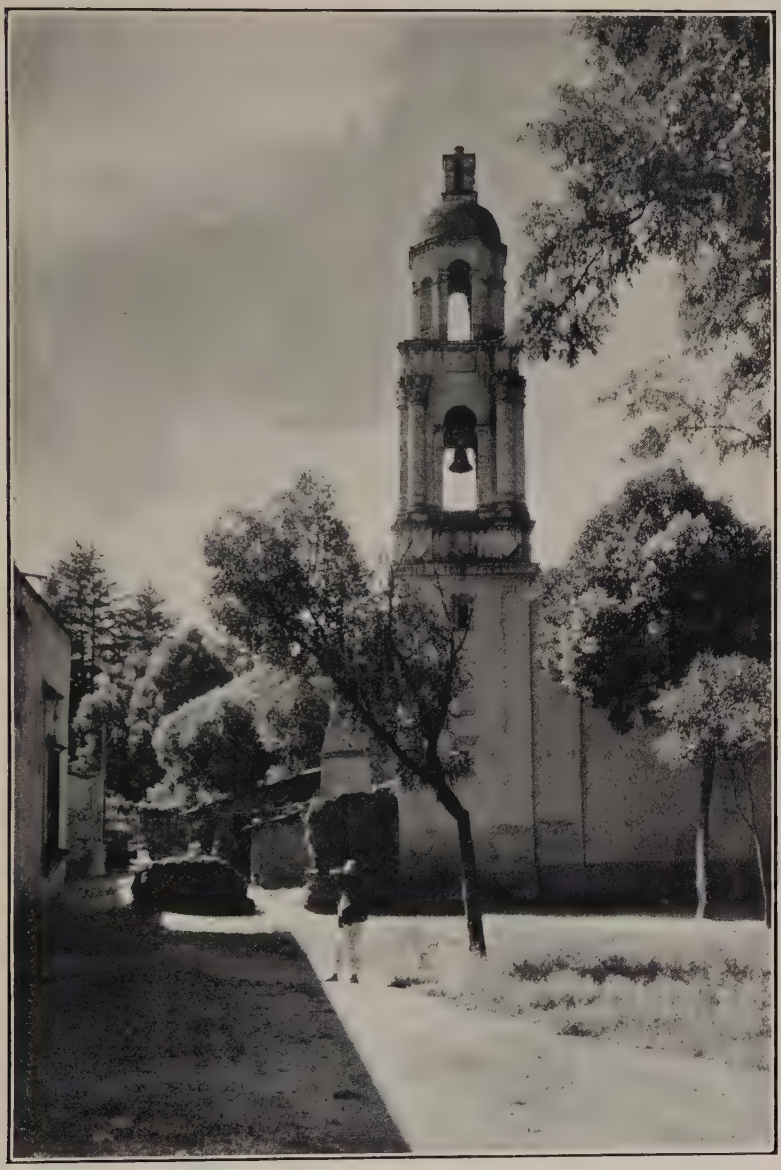

Photo by COX.]

Chimalista, near Mexico City.

[*Page* 222.

Little chapel built over the spot where Maximilian was shot at Querétaro.

[*Page* 223.

too great, if God call you speedily to rejoin me, I will bless the Divine hand which has so heavily pressed upon us. Adieu. Adieu. "YOUR POOR MAX."

Poor heartbroken Emperor!

The sun shone as if to mock him on that awful morning. Its bright rays glinted on the golden domes of Querétaro and played among the purples and blues, the yellows and oranges of those old Puebla tiles that adorn so many of the Querétaro churches, as if to remind him of that fateful fight at Puebla.

The second crop of maize was still uncut in the fields, the heat of summer had not yet browned the verdure. Life looked its best. Mexico showed her wealth of crops and the richness of her land; but it meant nothing to the Prince, the soldier, the Emperor and dreamer, who wrote these heartbroken words to an insane wife.

Three little crosses were put up to mark the spot which closed foreign rule in Mexico. And so, his life story ended, the Emperor of Mexico fell.

Thirty years later an insignificant chapel was erected by the Emperor Francis Joseph to commemorate the tragedy, and in April, 1901, a mission was sent from Austria in the persons of Prince Khevenhüller and Prince Fuerstenberg, to formally open the chapel. When General Diaz heard this he determined to do them all honour, and despatched his own special train to meet the party at Vera Cruz. It was a pretty act of courtesy, Maximilian's successor honouring the memory of his Imperial adversary.

Diaz, when compelled to surrender Oaxaca to the French, was detained a prisoner at Puebla, as we know, for about nine months. During that time Maximilian was a visitor there. The general in command of the troops told Diaz that the Emperor had arrived from the capital, and was going to make an inspection of the military prisons, when he hoped to have Diaz pointed out to him.

Diaz indignantly refused an interview; he did not wish to be "pointed out."

Later came a message to say that a carriage would be sent, in which Diaz might make a private visit to Maximilian.

"Tell him I will do nothing of the kind," and as General Diaz retailed the story to me his eyes sparkled with indignation, the whole man seemed on fire. "Tell him if he wishes to see me, he will have to *order me* to appear as a prisoner between soldiers, for in no other way will I go before him."

"And so you never met Maximilian?"

"Never," said the old General, shaking his head and defiantly jerking it back.

"And yet," he added, after a pause, "I was sorry for him, too."

CHAPTER XII.

THE FALL OF MEXICO CITY.

MAXIMILIAN was dead. For two whole days Mexico City still held out, though the Empire had crumbled away—held out, in fact, until this important news had time to filter through and be digested by the garrison.

Two causes were responsible for this protracted defence of the capital. No reason of state existed why it should longer withstand the Republic. There was now no organised power in the country save the Republican Government. But many of those cooped within the besiegers' lines, who had played a traitor's part when the fortunes of Juárez and the national cause seemed at their lowest ebb, had good reason to fear the consequences of submission, and so left nothing undone in their endeavour to make terms for themselves.

But General Diaz refused to consider anything but the unconditional surrender of the city; and moreover declined to sacrifice his men in an assault which he realised must be unnecessary; time unaided would do all that was required.

"I knew of the complete demoralisation within the city (he writes) by the frequent proposals which came to me from some of the leading men there, offering to desert and to facilitate my occupation."

General Tomás O'Horán had come out in the early stages of

the siege and had a conference with Diaz at night, concerning which the latter says :

" O'Horán offered to deliver the city to me, *together with Márquez and the other officers*, on the sole condition that in return I would give him a passport to leave the country."

It was a small price to pay for so large a prize, the safety of this one wretched man, but General Diaz was fully resolved that the capital and everyone within it should submit to the Republic with no question for future controversy as to how the submission was brought about. His only reply to these overtures was that he considered the town already his own, without the necessity of granting any terms.

Finally Márquez himself sent General Don Ramón Tavera with an offer to surrender the capital to the Republicans on conditions which have not been disclosed, but of which his own safety is pretty sure to have been the first clause. The General-in-Chief again replied that he would accept " nothing but unconditional surrender." He was in a position to dictate.

" The situation of the besieged (he writes) was becoming daily more difficult, owing to lack of provisions to sustain both their troops and the citizens. While the forces in the city diminished every day, mine were considerably increased, for I was daily receiving reinforcements from the army at Querétaro, and by the end of the siege I could muster twenty-eight thousand men."

Márquez thereupon disappeared mysteriously from the city, escaping the vengeance which would undoubtedly have been wreaked upon him by the infuriated people who had suffered under his cruelties. It is extraordinary that he should have got away so easily, for no man was better known than he, and, marked as he was with an ugly scar across his face, disguise was rendered difficult. He made his way to Havana, and troubled the country in which he had been so long a disturbing factor no more.

An expiring effort to arrange terms of capitulation was made

through the agency of the American Consul-General. It was equally without result. I quote General Diaz' diary again :

" On the day following my conversation with him, General Don Ramón Tavera sent me a message by Mr. Marcos Otterbourg, the Consul-General of the United States of America, repeating his appeal and offering to give up the city. I personally received Mr. Otterbourg at Chapultepec, and not only did I refuse to hear in detail the proposals he had brought me from the enemy, but I would not even allow him to alight from his carriage. I gave him warning that I was occupied at that moment in directing an attack upon the city, and that I would allow him five minutes' start on his return there. After that time if his vehicle was still on the road I would fire upon it.

" I waited, nevertheless, until Mr. Otterbourg's carriage had passed out of sight beyond the statue of Carlos IV., before I gave orders to the artillery to open fire, and to all the columns to make a general movement towards the outposts in front of the city."

It proved that a demonstration only was necessary, as General Diaz had anticipated, and soon a token of surrender was hoisted.

" The guard at Chapultepec reported to me that a white flag had appeared on one of the cathedral towers. I thereupon ordered that firing should cease, and later saw that similar flags had been raised in all the trenches around the city. At that moment a carriage came out also bearing a white flag. It brought Generals Miguel Peña, Diaz de la Vega, Palafox, and another, whose name I do not remember. They came to place the city at my disposal, being sent for this purpose by General Tavera, for they told me they had had no news of Márquez since the previous day.

" When these emissaries from the besieged city arrived at Chapultepec, I sent General Alatorre to interview them, and instructed him to receive nothing short of unconditional surrender. The deputation signed articles of capitulation, which were confirmed the same day by myself and General Tavera.

" Once the terms of capitulation were completed, I notified

General Tavera, through the generals who represented him, that he was to retain the command until the next day, when at dawn I would take possession of the city. Until that time he would be held responsible for its safety and all it contained."

Below is the text of the terms of capitulation :

"The Brigadier-General of the Republican army, Citizen Don Ignacio R. Alatorre, nominated by the General-in-Chief of the Acting Army, Citizen Porfirio Diaz, to arrange the occupation of the City of Mexico ; and the Generals of the Imperial army—Don Miguel Peña, Don Carlos Palafox, and Don Manuel Diaz de la Vega—nominated by General Don Ramón Tavera, after testing their respective powers and formally engaging in conference, have agreed on the following terms :

"(1) Hostilities are to cease from this time, pending the ratification of the present treaty.

"(2) The lives, property, and liberty of the peaceful inhabitants of the city are to remain under the guarantee and protection of Citizen General Diaz.

"(3) General Tavera shall nominate a deputation composed of three persons, who will place the city at the disposal of General Diaz on these lines : one official of the Exchequer, for that department ; one General, on behalf of the Imperialist forces ; and one artillery chief, for the military stores. The General to be the head of the Staff. An equal number of persons shall be nominated on the part of Citizen General Diaz, to receive the respective deputies.

"(4) The Imperial national forces, on being relieved at their posts, shall meet in the city, where they will wait to surrender themselves. The Schenet force shall be quartered in San Pedro and San Pablo, and the other troops in the Palace.

The generals, chiefs, and officers shall retain their swords and present themselves in the places assigned to them, at the time agreed upon by the Generals-in-Chief.

They will remain in these places until General Diaz receives instructions as to their disposal.

The above articles shall be carried into effect at the hour agreed upon, after the ratification of the present treaty, of which two copies shall be made.

"Chapultepec, June 20th, 1867.

(Signed) J. R. Alatorre.
Miguel Peña.
Carlos Palafox.
M. D. de la Vega.

"This treaty ratified: Porfirio Diaz.
"This treaty ratified: Ramón Tavera."

General Diaz, always careful and thoughtful in the discharge of his military duties, records his subsequent instructions:

"I reserved the occupation of the City of Mexico for the day following the signing of the capitulation. In order to avoid pillage and the seizure of such military stores as the enemy still possessed, I directed that all the military and civilian guards should remain at their posts until persons authorised by me were sent to relieve them. I at once organised a police service to cover the whole city, recruited from the battalions of Oaxaca Lancers—men whom I had reason to know were especially trustworthy. Detachments were to occupy places which I marked out for them on a plan of the town, and patrols were so arranged that not a single house should be out of sight. I also ordered another Oaxacan battalion, together with Lancers and the Juárez squadron, to be distributed about the city, to put down any attempt at organised rioting, should such be made. After these arrangements were satisfactorily completed troops were sent in."

Thus, without any disorder or bloodshed, the final occupation of Mexico City took place on June 21st, 1867; all the military officers, civil officials, and men who had shared in its defence were made prisoners.

"As a further precaution, I directed that the lines of invest-

ment should be maintained complete until further orders, and that no one was to be allowed to enter or leave the city without written authority from headquarters.

"The Imperialists at the more distant posts of defence did not wait for the arrival of my soldiers to take possession, as I had ordered, but threw aside their arms and stores of ammunition and concealed themselves. The only prisoners who made their submission in the first hours of my occupation of the capital were General Tavera and a few officers and men.

"I then issued a proclamation notifying that all the generals and officers of the Imperialist army were to give themselves up as prisoners of war, presenting themselves at different places which I assigned to them as temporary prisons, according to their rank. Any neglecting to do so would incur heavy punishment. I made a similar request to those who had served as Ministers, Councillors, and Chiefs of Departments in the Imperial administration, allowing them twenty-four hours in which to submit.

"The order was not obeyed, and when the time of grace had expired only a few had reported themselves. Thereupon I sent military pickets all over the city to search for and arrest those who came under the terms of the proclamation.

"General Don Santiago Vidaurri was one of the first to be dragged from his hiding-place. This man, who had been nominated one of Maximilian's Regents in the event of his death, and was head of the Emperor's Cabinet, had got out of Querétaro with Márquez, and had assisted the latter as his chief lieutenant in Mexico City until the end of the siege. Vidaurri had served the Republic, but had treacherously betrayed his country in one of the most anxious moments of the War of Intervention, leading a force of Imperialists into Monterrey against President Juárez, who had only his escort as a defence in that city.*

* Vidaurri had taken a prominent part in Mexican life, and in 1855 had been a candidate for the office of President. His Republican sympathies were believed to be sound, and he had fought for Juárez against the Reactionaries in the War of Reform, inflicting a decisive defeat upon General Miramón at Ahuluco. He was Republican Governor of San Luis Potosí at the time of his desertion to Maximilian, and his proximity to the seat of the Constitutional Government made his treachery doubly dangerous. But for the fortunate escape of Juárez and his Ministers from a position of great peril the Republican cause would have been lost.

"On his arrest being reported to me I gave orders that Vidaurri should be deprived of his arms and shot at once, with only such delay as was necessary for the purpose of formally identifying his person. I took this course, not only because of his having incurred the penalties laid down in my proclamation, but also on account of the part he had taken in prolonging the war by assisting the Imperialist cause; his execution, too, I intended should serve as an example to others who had not obeyed my order.

"I then gave an extension of twelve hours for the prisoners to present themselves, warning the military police to suspend their search during that time.

"This measure, after the example made of Vidaurri, was efficacious, for all the chiefs of the army and of the administration presented themselves without more difficulty. Márquez and O'Horán * alone hung back, but the latter was captured after President Juárez came into the city.

"On account of the friendliness that Baron Csismadia had shown me, and the consideration with which he had treated me when I was a prisoner in Puebla two years before, I allowed Prince Khevenhüller to keep his arms and command the Austrian troops for three days. They were placed under parole not to leave the precincts of the National Palace and its offices, where they were quartered. Some days afterwards I directed the Prince to deliver up his arms and horses, and assisted him in obtaining transport to Vera Cruz, whence he sailed for Europe."

This Prince Khevenhüller was the envoy who returned thirty years later as General Diaz' own guest to open the little chapel put up by the Austrians at Querétaro to mark the spot where Maximilian was shot.

"Captain Schenet, who commanded a body of about two hundred European scouts, had made me similar proposals to those of Prince Khevenhüller. I informed him that he might remain in his quarters, in the convent of San Pedro y San Pablo, surrendering with his arms, until further orders. Afterwards

* General Tomás O'Horán was afterwards tried by court-martial and shot.

I collected these arms from him and despatched him to Vera Cruz with his soldiers under the same conditions as Prince Khevenhüller, who offered a passage on the vessel *La Novara* for him and his men."

The soldier had accomplished his work, but there remained much to be done. Diaz lived a simple camp life in those first days of the restoration of the Republic to its former capital, devoting himself untiringly to solving the thousand and one problems which the termination of a prolonged war presented. The finances of the country were completely disorganised.

New men had to be found for administrative posts. Within a month of Maximilian's tragic death nearly one hundred thousand soldiers were quartered in the neighbourhood of Mexico City, few of whom had received pay for months. It is estimated that there must have been at that time quite two hundred thousand men in arms in the whole country; yet to-day Diaz rules Mexico, where population and commerce have vastly increased, with only thirty thousand men.

General Diaz made it his first duty to meet every liability as it became due. His capabilities as an administrator and financier, already put to the test in Oaxaca and other of the Eastern States that he had governed, never stood out more strongly than at this time. Rich Mexicans, knowing him to be a man of integrity, advanced him money with which to pay the soldiers and send them to their homes, and even foreigners in the country entrusted their dollars to him merely on the security of his word.

"During the siege of Mexico City," he says, "I succeeded in paying punctually, not only what was due to the force under my orders, but all other public expenses of the area over which I exercised command; in fact, there was even a balance to the good. The money collected consisted of the ordinary taxes of the States, and some special fines or impositions which I made upon persons who resided in the capital of the State, and whose property was beyond the limits of the State; also upon those who had compromised themselves with Maximilian,

and had thereby incurred the penalty of confiscation of their property.

"I also raised two important loans, one of $50,000 on my own personal credit, and another of $200,000 on my occupying the capital from various foreign merchants, mostly United States citizens, through the intermediary of the Consul-General of that country, the loans being reimbursed before the arrival of President Juárez in the capital.

"In spite of the varying fortunes of the campaign, and of the frequent changes in the persons employed for the commissariat, I was able to keep an account of all the moneys entrusted to me, beginning on October 1st, 1865, together with the money that I captured from Colonel Visoso, in Tulcingo, up to the time of the re-establishment of the Federal Government in Mexico, on July 15th, 1867."

Thus the table of impecuniosity turned. Not only were the rank and file paid, but the pay due to officers, which had accumulated during many years, was settled; and more than that, by the end of Diaz' first term of office he had started paying the *alcances*, or promised bonuses for which the Mexican officers had long waited. As time has gone on these debts have been applied for by all officers, and the *alcances* paid in full, with one notable exception. The President of the Republic has never put forward his claim to a bonus, which now amounts to many thousands of dollars.

An immense sensation was experienced throughout the country when it became known that General Diaz, who had crowned his career by restoring the Republic to its former capital after years of incessant fighting, and was now the future hope of Mexico, had on the very day that he occupied the city sent in his resignation. His communication was as follows:

"Republican Army, Eastern Line.
"General-in-Chief.

"To the Minister for War.

"The glorious war that the nation has waged against foreign intervention having been brought to a happy termination, after

a struggle of some six years, with the surrender of the capital to the army which I have the honour of commanding—as I am reporting to you in a separate despatch sent to-day—I have fulfilled my first duty in placing this city at the disposition of the supreme Constitutional Government of the Republic.

"Now I am going to perform my second duty, by notifying to you that, considering the great powers that have been conferred upon me no longer necessary, and my continuance in the position of General-in-Chief of the Eastern Division of the Army useless—a trust which was unmerited by me—I formally resign that charge, rendering to the President and to his worthy Minister my grateful thanks for the confidence with which they have honoured me, and begging them to be kind enough to nominate some person who can succeed me in command.

"You have the assurance of my humble appreciation and high consideration.

"INDEPENDENCE AND LIBERTY!

"Tacubaya, June 21st, 1867.
(Signed) "PORFIRIO DIAZ."

This was indeed a thunderbolt!

Juárez avoided either replying to, or accepting, the resignation until after his own entry into Mexico City, where he was welcomed by Diaz nearly a month later, amid tumultuous rejoicings by the army and populace. One of the President's first tasks was to reorganise the Republican army on a new basis, and General Diaz was offered and induced to accept the command of the second division.

It is well known that Benito Juárez always held his younger comrade in the highest esteem, and this feeling was reciprocated, but events were soon to happen which created a certain coldness in the relations of the two great citizens of the Republic. The dismissal by the Government of men who had served Diaz faithfully and efficiently opened the breach. Diaz returned to Mexico City from Tochuacan, where he had gone with his division, to remonstrate with the President. Juárez explained the

reasons for his orders, but declined to withdraw them, and the situation remained strained.

Busy man as he was, General Diaz had yet found time, while he was besieging the capital and a thousand cares fell upon his shoulders, to take to himself a wife—a step which caused no little surprise even to his intimate friends, and aroused great enthusiasm in the camp. The bride was Delfina Ortega y Reyes, and after the wedding, which took place outside the lines at Tacubaya, a large ball was held at the house of his comrade, Juan de Baz. Both bride and bridegroom were present at the ball, and there was great revelry at this soldier wedding. The hostess was the wife of his friend de Baz, whom Diaz mentions in his diary as having herself ridden out from Mexico City when his army approached, with overtures from Maximilian's Minister for War.

I cannot do better than close this chapter, and this important era in the progress of Mexico towards that wonderful consolidation of national sentiment and development of material resources, which have been the leading characteristics of President Diaz' rule, than by giving a couple of anecdotes which show in strong relief two sides of the character of the man.

It gave no little surprise to the army, on marching into the capital from Querétaro, to find posted on the walls and trees, palings and shops, as they neared Mexico City, the following placard :

EVERY PERSON WHO ROBS
FROM 25 CENTS UPWARDS
WILL BE HANGED.

Wheat was growing high in the fields at the time Maximilian was shot. The soldiers cut it for their horses, for their beds, and to keep their cooking fires burning. The men had themselves received no pay, and simply seized on everything they could lay their hands upon to supply their wants, spoiling and destroying everywhere. This conduct roused the resentment of General Diaz, and caused him to issue the above proclamation decreeing

death by hanging for thefts even so small as twenty-five cents (less than one shilling); at the same time, he ordered that the soldiers who came under his command should have all that they legitimately required, but receipts for the goods must be given in full, and these would be paid later.

Some two thousand men were on the march to the capital, under General N——. Many of their horses had been shot during the siege, and as they had not been able to commandeer others in sufficient numbers to replace them, troopers were to be seen trudging along on foot and carrying their saddles. This was hot, exhausting, and uncomfortable. Various officers went off to scour the country to find fresh horses, disregarding the manifesto of Diaz, which they looked upon rather as a joke. At a town a short distance from Mexico City, a scout came to General N——, and informed him that three of his officers were about to be shot for raiding horses. He was furious.

"By whose orders?" he demanded.

"By the order of the General-in-Chief, General Diaz, in his proclamation," was the reply.

"And who is carrying out this order?" the general enquired.

"The *Jefe Politico*," was the answer.

A *Jefe Politico* is a very important personage; he is more than a mayor and more than a magistrate. He has under his command both regular soldiers and the *rurales*. He is responsible for order to the government of his part of his State. He rules over a large area or district, of which there are several in each State, and possesses authority equivalent to martial law.

Never having heard of anything so extraordinary in all his campaigning experiences, General N—— instructed his men to take the *Jefe* prisoner, and bring him handcuffed before him. Shortly afterwards a man arrived with his arm in a sling.

"Who are you?" demanded General N——.

"I am the *Jefe Politico*, and am carrying out the orders of General Diaz, under whom I acted as commandante, and was wounded at Puebla. It is impossible for me to succeed with my small handful of men against your two thousand; but I would not have come to you except under protest."

The General ordered the *Jefe* to be marched as a prisoner in the middle of his soldiers, and so they made their way to Guadalupe, where General Corona had already arrived with a large contingent of men. An order was here awaiting General N——, instructing him to proceed immediately to Mexico City and report himself to General Diaz.

This he did, and when he arrived, after four miles' gallop, he found, to his surprise, the *Jefe* already there before him. Some conversation ensued in which Diaz congratulated the mayor-magistrate on carrying out his instructions, and then asked him how he would wish General N—— punished for not obeying the proclamation.

"I wish for no other punishment than that he should apologise," replied the *Jefe Politico*.

"Do so immediately," commanded Diaz.

A long pause ensued, when Diaz repeated solemnly the three words: "Do so immediately."

Still no reply. Then, thumping his hand on the table, Diaz roared:

"Apologise at once."

General N—— bit his lip, but he apologised.

Turning to the *Jefe*, Diaz again congratulated him warmly on his behaviour and his assiduous attention to orders, and wished him a speedy recovery from his wound. Diaz has always been a man of immense determination but of few words, and this was another instance of these two points. He even blamed his own general when someone else was in the right.

The second anecdote was told a year or two ago at a national commemoration at Chapultepec, in honour of General Bravo, a hero of the War of Independence. With exquisite tact—the President being present—the orator of the day, the Hon. Alfredo Chavero, withheld the name of the "Mexican General who, eighty years after Medellin, wrote the following"; but the author is, of course, General Diaz, and the occasion the surrender of the Imperialists in Puebla after the storming of the city. I quote it as it appeared in the *Mexican Herald*, that wonderful American-English paper printed daily in Mexico City:

"The generals who were prisoners in one part of the same palace asked to speak with me. They begged me to permit the entrance of some members of their families with whom they desired to converse, as well as of some Catholic priests and notaries, as they had arrangements to make.

"I immediately sent for writing materials and sealed paper of all kinds, and caused several additional rooms to be placed at their disposal, so that each in turn might be alone with the priests.

"They spent their time until three o'clock in the afternoon in confession and in making their wills.

"At about half-past three o'clock I conducted them personally and without any other escort than my aides to the Episcopal Palace, where all the prisoners from colonels down to second lieutenants were gathered, to the number of about five hundred, as well as the bishops, whom I had also notified that they must consider themselves prisoners.

"Having arrived there and assembled the entire party, I informed them that, according to the laws in force, they were all liable to the death penalty. But inasmuch as the number was so great, I thought that the Government, when apprised of the circumstances, would exercise clemency. For the end in question it would be necessary, acting strictly, to hold them in close confinement, but I told them that I, who had endured imprisonment and knew how painful it was, would spare them that suffering, if they engaged to present themselves to me whenever I should summon them through the Press, if the Government called me to account. That I acted thus was, I said, to spare them pain as well as on account of the great confidence which I felt in the triumph of the Republic, even if they should be false to their engagement.

"All, deeply moved, answered that they were willing, and they began to sign the document which I caused to be read to them aloud, each one being released as soon as he had attached his signature.

"Colonel Vital Escamilla, who was among the prisoners, had, at the time of my escape from Puebla, been *Jefe Politico* of

Matamoros Izucar. When Count Thun published a circular offering $10,000 as a reward for anyone who should capture me, alive or dead, Escamilla, in his capacity as mayor, impelled by an excess of zeal on behalf of the Empire, when reproducing the circular offered an additional thousand dollars out of his own pocket for my head. Probably on this account he was afraid to come forward and sign, as his comrades were then doing in my presence.

"Colonel Visoso, who served the Republic, and who was a *compadre* and great friend of Escamilla, was also present. He came to crave a pardon for him, making believe that he had hidden Escamilla somewhere in the city, and, of course, withholding the fact that he was really present with the other prisoners. I had not hitherto been acquainted with Escamilla personally, but became so at that moment, someone pointing him out to me. I granted Visoso's request.

"Calling Escamilla by name, I told both him and Visoso that if the former (Escamilla) had not yet gone free, it was because he had not thus far signed the document, but that I hoped he would do so when his turn came.

"Escamilla sought to exonerate himself to me, saying he supposed that certain calumnies against him had come to my knowledge.

"I told him that a copy of his circular had fallen into my hands, and that I had it, in fact, at that moment in my pocket-book. Drawing it out I handed it to him, telling him that I was very glad that neither had I lost my head, nor had he been obliged to disburse his thousand dollars!

"He then signed the promise and went free."

CHAPTER XIII.

DIAZ BECOMES PRESIDENT.

On one occasion I asked General Diaz how it came about that he conceived the first inspiration to become President.

"I never did," he replied; "my highest ambition as a young man was to be made a colonel in the army, and at one time that ambition seemed quite unlikely ever to be fulfilled. I just drifted to the position I now hold, and I often wonder how it ever came about."

"But you have made modern Mexico," I persisted.

"You must make no mistake," continued General Diaz, "I have not made Mexico—I have only been one of a number. It is such men as Limantour who have made the country what it is. Limantour is a great statesman, but he has never pushed himself forward. He refused to accept nomination for the Presidency when I wanted to retire in 1904. He is a great man, a great diplomatist, a great financier, and he has done much for this country."

And so he continued to talk about several others who have shared his labours.

Did I not know General Diaz I should feel inclined to think his modesty assumed; but this shrinking from praise is so marked in his daily life that one soon realises it is part and parcel of the man—a man of extraordinary strength yet inordinately retiring.

Diaz had restored Mexico City to the Republicans, within which their red, white and green tricolour flag has never since been lowered. His marvellous success as a soldier and his daring military exploits won for him the unstinted affection of the

General Porfirio Diaz, President of Mexico.

[*Page* 240.

The Cathedral, Mexico City, built on the site of the old Aztec Temple (1573).

[*Page* 241.

troops whom he led, and made him the national hero. But since the events recounted in the last chapter a period of nine years was still to pass before he was raised to the office which gave him practically supreme power.

It seems, perhaps, extraordinary that just as he attained such success as the capture of Mexico City, he should throw over his command of the army. Again, it appears remarkable that just as there was a chance of peace and prosperity after half a century of misrule, he should retire from public life and busy himself in the south as a farmer.

"Why?" one asks.

He knew his power, he knew his strength; but he also knew an older man who had never attained the real position he deserved, and the younger man nobly stood aside.

Those were quiet years for the most part with Diaz; years in which the general with a record of twenty battlefields contentedly retired to live the simple life of a sugar planter near the city of his birth, amid scenes which must repeatedly have recalled to his memory many stirring incidents in which he had figured. During these years he learnt much. He studied agriculture in quite a professional manner, saw the great possibilities of the soil, the necessity of irrigation, and other details, all of which he found of practical value when himself called upon to rule.

Ineptitude and mismanagement in the administration of the country, which threatened once more to bring it back to its former state, called him again into activity. When he finally left his hacienda it was to meet with some of the most exciting experiences and hairbreadth escapes that fell even to his romantic career. The years between 1867 and 1872 marked his final breach with Juárez, with whom he had worked assiduously since the first days of the *Reforma*, and for whose sake he had gone into retirement.

No comparison of Juárez and Diaz could do justice to either man. Their natures were in most respects dissimilar. An unquenchable love of national liberty, for which they had shown themselves prepared to stake everything and to make the greatest

sacrifices, they shared in common. Both had lived in daily peril of their lives, and had willingly undergone privation and hardship through long and weary years when the cause which they were strenuously upholding seemed hopeless. A common end, a common ideal, bound them together in the struggle which began with the War of Reform, continued through the French Intervention from 1862, and convulsed the country from border to border, until, with the death of Maximilian, the object of the strife no longer existed. The absolute loyalty of Diaz to Juárez is shown by all his actions. It was not, and never has been, questioned.

The end had been attained. Diaz had restored Mexico City to the Republicans. The Republic was re-established on a basis from which no shock, either external or internal, was likely to displace it. Foreign domination had been driven from the country, and an example set which was well calculated to discourage any similar enterprise. Now that the time had arrived for the realisation of the ideal, a constitutional government with equal rights for all, it need give no cause for surprise that the two men should separate. That Diaz, who has built up a nation, will be accounted by history the foremost statesman that his country has produced is assured, but Mexico will always have cause to gratefully remember that it was Juárez who laid deep the foundations upon which he built.

A formal election taken in August, 1867, confirmed the informal proceedings at Paso del Norte, and established Juárez in the office of President of the Republic for a further term of four years. Porfirio Diaz was nominated by his admirers as their candidate, but he refused to accept a contest.

Juárez now began his third term of the Presidency, but the first in which he had enjoyed undisputed authority, and set to work to recreate the national life, which had been so torn and dismembered by the events of the past ten years.

He was in his sixty-second year. In times of storm and stress he had stood firm as a rock, the liberator of his country, never disheartened, never doubting that the triumph of his cause would be complete. Had Mexico wanted a hero, here, indeed, was the man; there is something that is noble and pathetic in the

figure of the staunch old Zapotecan, who, advanced in years, and after a life of intense mental and physical strain, was taking upon himself the task of rehabilitating his country—a task which might well have taxed the utmost capabilities of a younger man. It called for qualities which he did not possess. His Presidency, in short, was not a success.

Juárez was far removed from what excited European opinion of the time pictured him, a half-savage Indian, foreign to all the refinements of civilisation and culture, one who had taken the life of his adversary, the Emperor Maximilian, in sheer lust of blood.

Europe, indeed, misled by the gross malignities of his enemies who found refuge in the Old World, formed an estimate of the man which was wholly false. In early years he had been an ardent student. "He was able," says Dr. Noll,* "to write French with ease; and could read English, though he never attempted to speak it. He was well read in Constitutional Law. History was his favourite study. He received the degree of Doctor of Civil Law from his *alma mater* (the University of Oaxaca), and the honour was worthily conferred. His state papers were models of clearness and exact style."

Juárez was a man of great reserve. Courteous to all with whom he came in contact, he preserved the stoicism of his race in a marked degree. Though he occupied the foremost position, and spoke a tongue which lends itself peculiarly to stately phrases and lively imagery, remarkably few of his utterances survive. The sombre coat of plain black broadcloth which he wore, unrelieved by a single decoration, typified the man, so different in external appearance and qualities of mind from the heavily gold-laced, bemedalled and bejewelled individuals whom treasons, stratagems and plots had for half a century made Dictators of Mexico. When he had convinced himself that a certain course was for the country's good, nothing would bend him from his purpose. Himself the soul of honesty, he looked for an equally high standard of public morality in those to whom he entrusted office, but did not always find it. A more diplomatic man, possibly even a less honest man, would in the

* "From Empire to Republic." Page 285.

peculiar circumstances of the time have avoided some of the troubles which beset President Juárez.

Like many another statesman before him, and like Diaz himself who came after, Juárez found that a country just recovering from revolution is not the most profitable soil in which to sow the seeds of Liberal reform. Much was expected of him that he found it impossible in the still disturbed condition of Mexico to grant. The Spanish temperament was never patient. He was reminded of promises which there is no reason to doubt he was loyally anxious to fulfil when opportunity favoured. They could not be—or, at any rate, were not—fulfilled at the time, and the disillusionment of those who had hoped for the most Liberal measures from the re-establishment of the Republic began to create a general spirit of discontent.

Juárez remained immovable; conscious of the purity of his aims, firm in his adherence to a great principle in face of all opposition.

Nor was he altogether happy in his selection of men. As we have seen, his differences with Diaz began when he displaced officials whom his most brilliant general had found invaluable in the course of his arduous campaigns. Diaz protested; Juárez listened, but with dogged persistency refused to alter his decisions.

General Diaz, in accordance with the President's express wish, continued to serve for some months in carrying out an entire reorganisation of the army. As soon as this necessary work had been accomplished he sought his discharge without his pay, in order that he might be under no obligation to the Government, with which his sympathies as time went on became more and more estranged. Juárez fully realised what the loss of this vigorous personality to the army and to himself would mean. In vain he endeavoured to persuade Diaz from his purpose, and finally granted his discharge in May, 1868, with the pay due. "It was," said the old President, "the nation's debt to her servant according to the law. The law, and not the Government, paid the debt."

Diaz returned to his native State and to his wife, from

whom his military duties had kept him long parted. During the following years General Diaz' three children were born, but he never let his own domestic affairs interfere with his life as a soldier. Often he had to leave his home, his wife, or a child's bed of sickness to help the Republican cause which he held so dear. Those were happy years of domestic peace, and Señora Diaz was such a good, sensible, kind woman that he knew he could trust her to do the best for the children in his absence, and be ever ready with a smile to greet him on his return; but she only lived a few years.

His journey from the capital when he withdrew from the army was in the nature of a triumphal march. Oaxaca received him with open arms. Fêtes were organised in his honour, enthusiasm was raised to the highest pitch, and in admiration of his distinguished services to the cause of National Independence he was presented by the city of his birth with the farm and estate of La Noria.

Here, at any time during the next four or five years, he might have been found displaying as keen an interest in the growth of cane sugar as before he had shown in the most momentous affairs of State.

He took no active part in politics, though the Liberals who had broken with Juárez came to regard him as their chief. The discontent against the Republican Government grew, and at last manifested itself in open revolt; but there was no organised plan, and these sporadic risings were speedily put down. Santa Anna, the centre of so many of the most stormy episodes of Mexican history, re-entered the country, was captured and sentenced to be shot; and no doubt the Government thought themselves well rid of him when he was allowed to escape and return to his former exile. Diaz persistently refrained from taking any steps which would complicate still further the difficulties surrounding his old chief.

A different aspect of affairs came about when it was known in 1871 that Juárez was intending to put himself forward for a further term in the Presidency. The country was intensely excited.

Many of Juárez' most intimate friends, while bearing generous testimony to his incalculable services in the past, strove to dissuade him from a step which they believed must be attended with disastrous results. His four years of office had removed but few of the perils which threatened the nation. The advanced Liberals were incensed, such of the old Conservatives and Reactionaries as remained were eagerly hoping to gain something from an upheaval, and signs were not wanting that, unless restrained by a strong hand, the nation would again split up into factions, with all the attendant evils of civil war. Juárez, nevertheless, persisted in his belief that he was necessary at the head of affairs to maintain good government for Mexico—the good government for which she had fought and suffered.

Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada was nominated against him.

Then it was that Porfirio Diaz came out of his retirement to stand as a candidate, and the South awoke to great enthusiasm. The triangular contest was a close and exciting one. Congress met on September 16th, but it was not until four weeks later that Benito Juárez was declared to be re-elected by the votes of a majority of the States.

Anticipating events, the Governor of Nuevo-León in September denounced the Government and declared General Diaz President. *Pronunciamientos* followed in other parts, but all such attempts to restore rule by force were successfully repressed. On November 8th, 1871, Diaz issued from his homestead in Oaxaca the famous protest known as the "Plan of Noria," on behalf of the reforms promised under the Constitution of 1857, but never instituted. A manifesto was circulated proposing to convene an Assembly of Notables to reorganise the Government, with General Diaz to assume the powers of Commander-in-Chief of the army until such a Government could be founded.

Diaz left the South, where the movement had its chief centre, in the early spring of the following year, and arrived at Chihuahua, in the North, only to be met with the news that Juárez was dead.

The President had expired, after a day's illness, on July 18th from an affection of the heart. Mexico lost in him a great

patriot. Born in poverty, he lived and died poor, with means of enrichment at his hand from which others had not hesitated to profit. Juárez gave to Mexico an example of a virtue which hitherto had been all too rare among her rulers, that of a man who was absolutely honest and incorruptible. His dust reposes in the Pantheon of San Fernando, in the capital. There every year, on the anniversary of his death, a pilgrimage is made to his tomb, and in the celebrations which accompany it the youth of Mexico is taught to revere the memory of the great Zapotecan-Indian who devoted a laborious life ungrudgingly to accomplish the nation's welfare.

By a wise provision of the Constitution of Mexico, which existed unaltered throughout the country's most tumultuous days—though not always honoured—on the death of the head of the Republic, the President of the Supreme Court of Justice stepped provisionally into his place. It afforded a bulwark, if only a slender one, against the usurpation of the first dictator who took occasion to proclaim himself. Lerdo de Tejada succeeded Juárez. The capital remained quiet.

With the institution of the new Government the purpose of armed hostility existed no longer. The rising subsided at once. General Diaz returned to Oaxaca, to watch from there the course of events.

Lerdo de Tejada was as an administrator but little known to his countrymen, but his reputation as a patriot stood deservedly high. He had remained by the side of Juárez in those years when, harried by the armies of Bazaine and Maximilian, the fugitive Government was driven from pillar to post; and when peace returned had filled office with some success.

As a politician he had been under the influence of Juárez, and trained in his school. A lawyer of repute, and a scholar, he had shown evidence of broad-minded sympathy with the demands, which had been growing daily more clamorous, for the realisation of the programme of Reform. A general amnesty which he hastened to proclaim greatly strengthened his position, and when in the late autumn he ordered an election, he had no

difficulty in securing his re-establishment as Constitutional President for a further term of four years.

General Diaz on this occasion stood aside.

Had his patriotism been subordinate to his ambition, no time could have been more favourable to " pronounce " himself. His attitude towards Lerdo evinced a steady purpose to do nothing which could add to the difficulties of the President and his Government, but, on the contrary, to afford them every facility for a fair trial. Though he had been in virtual rebellion against Juárez in his closing days, when death removed that eminent man General Diaz at once recognised Lerdo's claim under the Constitution, as head of the Supreme Court, to succeed to the Presidency. He withdrew from the contest he had begun, and used his influence with his followers to assist the Republican Government in maintaining order.

A month after the election Diaz himself visited the capital, and was made the subject of popular ovation. Demonstrations were organised for him. His name was everywhere mentioned as that of the next President. Various States of the Republic took occasion to confer high distinctions upon him. If the truth were known, his presence in Mexico City was probably not a little embarrassing to the existing President. Lerdo could not have been unconscious of the fact that his own personality was lacking in that glamour of military exploits which made Diaz the darling of the populace. An impulsive and impressionable people like the Mexicans are always apt to follow the leadership of their hero.

Lerdo, gauging the feelings of the public, invited Diaz to occupy high positions in his Government and the State, all of which he declined. A diplomatic mission to a foreign country was proffered, and also failed to win acceptance. Diaz, in spite of his friends' solicitations, preferred to maintain his independence, and went back to sugar-planting.

Lerdo de Tejada had not the skill to pass unscathed through so fiery an ordeal as the Presidency of Mexico thirty-five years ago. It offended the advanced Liberals, whose hopes centred more and more upon General Diaz, that Lerdo should have retained

many members of Juárez' Government among his councillors. A dozen forces were at work to undermine him. The country, however, was exhausted, and his Presidency, if undistinguished in other ways, was at least by outward signs peaceful. Prosperity began slowly to return. Deceived by the indications around him, and misjudging the strength of his opponents, Lerdo, as the expiration of his period of office drew near, began his preparations for securing a further term. At once the flood-gates were opened upon him, and in the turbulent waters he was overwhelmed.

The statesmen who drafted the Constitution of the Spanish-American Republics and sought to make impossible the re-election of the existing President for a second term, did not act without good reason. Nothing was easier than for a dictator, once he had secured his election constitutionally, to so manipulate the voting that, save by an armed rising, he could never be displaced.

Political elections have been "managed" in many countries in the most scandalous way. Mexico had seen the method brought to its full perfection under Santa Anna. The South American Republics have given countless examples. How grave the peril was recognised by the founders of the Mexican Constitution of 1857, which had made the ineligibility of the President to receive re-election one of the main planks; but the reform, though desirable, had in the divided state of the country never been enforced.

It is not necessary to recapitulate the charges of corruption, persecution, extortion, and general mismanagement of the country's affairs which were launched against Lerdo. They were not wanting in violence and completeness, but to his enemies the very fact that he was attempting to stand again, in violation of the provisions of the Constitution, and so perpetuate the evils which they saw in his previous Government, was the chief cause of his offence.

In the category of men considered by a Government which had become increasingly reactionary to be dangerous, General Diaz had not been overlooked.

Mexico was once more ripe for revolution, which soon came.

Diaz left the State of Oaxaca in the winter of 1875, passed to Vera Cruz, and on December 5th sailed from that port on board the *Corsica* to the United States, intending to take charge of affairs in the north of Mexico. With him went General González, who had been the subject of bitter persecution by the Lerdist Government, and now became one of his stoutest adherents. They were on the seas when General Hernandez issued his "Plan du Tuxtepec," denounced the Government, and at the head of two thousand badly-armed troops marched on the city of Oaxaca.

The days of "Plans" are now passed. The "Plan du Tuxtepec" was destined to be the last. For thirty years no political manifesto has disturbed the peaceful development of the country. As this was the "Plan" upon which Diaz stepped into the Presidency, and it affords an indication of the policy with which he began his rule, I give the text of its chief articles. It is a fair example of the type of *pronunciamientos* which had played so large a part in Mexican history:

"*Article* 1. The Supreme Law of the Republic shall be the Constitution of 1857, the Reform Act promulgated on September 25th, 1873, and the Law of December, 1874.

"*Article* 2. The same law making the President and Governors of the States ineligible to the same position will be maintained, this being a measure of constitutional reform which we agree to sustain by all the legal means afforded us by the Constitution.

"*Article* 3. We repudiate Don Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada as President of the Republic, and all those persons employed by him or occupying positions under him, or elected at the elections of July, 1875.

"*Article* 4. All State Governments adhering to this 'Plan' will be recognised. Those refusing to do so will be placed under a Provisional Government to be appointed by the executive officer of the army.

"*Article* 5. The election of officers of the Union will be held two months after the capture of the capital of the Republic,

at such places as the executive shall appoint one month after capture, and will be held under the election laws of February 13th, 1857, and October 23rd, 1872. At the time appointed for the interior elections Congress shall assemble, and shall proceed immediately to carry out the provisions of Article 51 of the first-mentioned laws, in order that the Constitutional President of the Republic may enter upon the discharge of the functions of his office, and that the supreme tribunal may be installed."

The South and East flocked to the standard of the revolution. Oaxaca received General Hernandez and his band with immense enthusiasm. They marched into that city on January 27th, 1876. One of General Hernandez' first acts was to proclaim General Porfirio Diaz Commander-in-Chief of the Army of Reorganisation. He himself took charge of the government of the State. In six weeks the revolution had spread from Oaxaca throughout the States of Vera Cruz, Puebla, Guerrero, Jalisco, Yucatán, and Nuevo-León. On March 22nd General Diaz, in company with General González, left the United States, where he had landed and found temporary refuge, and crossed the Rio Grande from Brownsville, Texas, with forty followers, to direct the movements of the revolutionists in the North.

Later, Don José María Iglesias, President of the Supreme Court of Justice, also took occasion for a *pronunciamiento*. If Lerdo was not President, then under the Constitution he claimed to be his successor. He established a weak government of his own at Guanjuato, but was never a formidable factor in the *mêlée*. Thus there were three parties in the field, the "Lerdistas," the "Porfiristas" and the "Iglesistas," as they came to be respectively termed.

Lerdo moved with decision. At the outset his vigorous measures were able to control the situation, though he proved powerless to suppress the revolt. Diaz' forty stalwart men multiplied twenty-fold as he moved southward through the country. By the end of March he considered his force strong enough to attack Matamoros, a place occupied by a Lerdist garrison under La Barra, which was the key to the

north-east. The assault was delivered on April 2nd, and the position captured—a notable day for Diaz, for it was the anniversary of the storming of Puebla. Seven hundred prisoners were taken, and eighteen cannon. Seven weeks later he advanced to Icamole, and there defeated a larger force under General Fuero.

Thoroughly alarmed by the success of his vigorous antagonist in the North, Lerdo had despatched an army of six thousand men, under General Escobedo, to put down the rising. Its approach gave the victorious leader reason to pause and reconsider his plans. The difficulties of attempting to break through to the South were great. The sparsely-populated character of the country in which he was fighting, for Northern Mexico is practically all ranch land, gave him little chance of raising a force of sufficient strength to meet Escobedo in open battle.

Diaz acted with his customary resolution. Long experience in guerilla warfare had trained him to calculate his chances. His following was not strong enough. The only thing to be done was to get down to the South, where the revolution was making steady headway, and where his presence would prove an immense stimulus to the men whom he had led to victory on so many notable battlefields. He scattered his forces, and, retracing his steps northward through the country which he had traversed, made his way back almost alone to New Orleans.

The story of his return to Mexico to take supreme command of the Army of the Revolution reads more like a chapter from some boy's favourite book of romance and adventure than a passage from the life of the President of a great Republic. One day it is to be hoped that General Diaz will be persuaded to write the narrative in his own words. Meantime it can only be put together by relating what has been told by others. New Orleans at that time was swarming with exiles from Mexico, but so well had he disguised himself that he moved about unrecognised by men to whom he must have been well known.

A few days after his arrival Doctor Torres embarked at New Orleans on board the steamship *City of Havana*. This medical gentleman, of Cuban nationality, was on his way to Vera Cruz.

It was a pleasant voyage, and the ship stopped at Tampico. There the passengers, who so far had been a select company, found their comfort disturbed by a body of Mexican troops who were crowded on board. Part of these had been prisoners whom Diaz had captured at Matamoros, and afterwards had been compelled to release.

It needed but a few hasty glances, a few whispered conversations with a meaning look in his direction, to convince the Cuban doctor that his identity had been discovered. General Diaz, who had passed unknown among people of his own class, had been detected by men whom his military daring had brought into his hands. Here was a dilemma. A possible chance of safety lay on land. He would, of course, be in the enemy's country, but that he must risk. Nothing was more certain than that he would be closely watched and made a prisoner if he remained on the ship. Diaz was brave, but what good was there in throwing his life away?

The steamer was anchored far out from the shore. Little twinkling lights outlined the quays and the few low houses clustered around them. One method of escape was still open. It needed a desperate resolve, and he made it.

That night he came upon deck to breathe the cool air. No one was looking. Quietly he slipped overboard and struck out for the shore.

Not only tarpon but sharks infest the waters of the Gulf. Fortunately for Mexico they left her future ruler alone. Diaz was a man of nerve, but the stoutest swimmer might feel his blood run cold at the prospect of a long and exhausting struggle, with the chance at any moment of being snapped by the sharp teeth of one of these voracious monsters. He had not made many strokes when commotion on board the ship told him that his flight had been detected.

Then a boat was lowered, and pulled off towards him.

It was a desperate moment; he made a supreme effort. Diaz did his best, but no swimmer can hope to outdistance a boat propelled by the strong arms of sailors. He was overtaken, dragged out of the water, and brought back to the ship.

All attempt at disguise was now thrown off. The Lerdistas had got their redoubtable foe at last. He was made prisoner, and would probably be shot. A bright thought struck him. He claimed protection under the flag of the United States. The request was granted. He was free—until he arrived at Vera Cruz.

Some days were occupied by the passage. Diaz' quick wits were kept on the alert. He made friends with the purser, who was able to do him good service. On the night after his freedom was restored to him Diaz approached this officer, carrying a life-buoy in his hand. He asked his connivance, if not his active assistance, in making another attempt to reach the shore.

The two put their heads together. The purser realised better than Diaz himself that the chance of meeting death by drowning exceeded that of safely reaching the shore by swimming from the distance at which the vessel was then out to sea, and suggested an alternative plan, to which in all probability General Diaz owes his life to-day.

Late that night a splash was heard by the watch from the ship's side. Commotion ensued, people were quickly on deck. Diaz was sought and could nowhere be found. Not only was he missing, but it was discovered that the vessel was a life-buoy short. A minute search was made by the sailors, which threw no light on the passenger's mysterious disappearance. The captain was persuaded that Diaz had gone overboard, and drew up a formal report to that effect. Some days later the discovery of a life-buoy thrown up on the sea-shore, bearing the words *S.S. City of Havana*, left little doubt as to what had been Diaz' fate.

On the arrival of the steamer at Vera Cruz the Commandante of the port, nettled at being robbed of so valuable a prize, ordered a further inspection of the ship.

This proved fruitless, but as a precaution, lest the slippery Diaz, though believed to be dead, might yet escape through his hands, a detachment of soldiers in boats were posted to keep guard round the vessel.

No one had thought of priseing open a sofa-seat in the purser's

cabin, within which for seven days and nights he had been cooped up and half stifled. The Lerdist officers had actually sat upon him when they accepted the hospitality of the purser's cabin for a hand of cards at night.

Diaz had escaped so far, but how was he to land when the ship was so carefully watched on mere suspicion ?

He waited his opportunity, and eventually, by the aid of the devoted purser, came safely ashore disguised as a sailor. After further exciting adventures and narrow escapes from capture, he turned up again at Oaxaca. His reappearance put new enthusiasm into the movement.

The revolution went rapidly ahead. It was not long before Diaz had rallied four thousand armed men around him. Organising his forces in those Mexican States which were almost unanimous for his cause, he prepared for decisive battle.

General Diaz had every reason to feel confidence in the men he commanded, veterans largely recruited from his native State, who had fought with him at the storming of Puebla, the critical engagement at La Carbonera, and many another sanguinary encounter. They would follow their leader to death. In point of numbers the Lerdists had still the superiority. General Alatorre marched against the Revolutionists with an army larger than that which Diaz had yet been able to put into the field, and the rival forces faced one another at Tecoac on the 16th of November.

The fight was long and stubborn. The Porfiristas held their own against great odds until late in the afternoon, when the fortunate arrival of General González with reinforcements helped to relieve the tension. At a moment of crisis in the engagement General Diaz placed himself at the head of his men, and, addressing a few words to them to rouse their martial spirit, led them in person in an impetuous charge. The onslaught broke Alatorre's army in two. The day ended in a complete victory for the Porfiristas. Upwards of three thousand prisoners were taken. The defeated Lerdists hurried from the field, leaving in the hands of the conquerors all their baggage and artillery.

General Diaz struck at once for the capital. News of the

disaster to the Lerdists had reached Mexico City before him. Lerdo fled to Acapulco on his approach, taking with him most of his Ministers and all of the public funds that he could lay hands on. He made no further attempt at a stand, and left the country for the United States.

Iglesias thereafter endeavoured to make terms with Diaz. His overtures were refused, and he also went into exile.

Diaz continued his march, occupying Puebla on his way. Leaving General Contellene in charge of that city, he appeared before the Republican capital at the head of twelve thousand men on November 23rd, 1876. He drew up his army at Guadalupe, four miles out. Next day he made his triumphal entry into the city and rode up to the Palace, where he established himself, practically for life.

Three weeks later was the anniversary fête of the Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. This is the greatest of all Mexican fêtes, and the turn of events gave to the present occasion especial significance. Great were the rejoicings when the twenty or thirty thousand pilgrims from all parts of Mexico learned of the triumph of their popular hero, and they mingled his name with their prayers. The Church of Rome gave permission for these festivals, and in 1754 a Papal Bull officially instituted and sanctioned the 12th of December as the feast day of the "Patron Saint of Mexico, the famous Lady of Guadalupe."

I had the privilege of seeing this wondrous sight in 1900. For days before the festival Indians arrive by train, though most of the pilgrims come on foot. Many of them have to cover hundreds of miles, and often carry all their worldly belongings with them.

It is a strange and weird sight. Here a beggar maid, accompanied by a little girl, both fragile and delicate-looking, who have tramped on day by day to pray at the famous shrine. There an old Indian, with wrinkled brows, leads a child by the hand, while he himself is bent nearly double by the weight upon his back. He carries blankets, the tiny basin in which to light his fire, a few pots and pans, some sugar-cane to chew, and a roll of matting or canvas which will be supported later on sticks,

Photo by GARNAT.]

Mexican-Indian squaw and babe.

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Photo by GARNAT.]

Boyish cardplayers.

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to make a sort of umbrella-like covering for his family. His squaw, in rags and tatters, follows behind, a baby of nine or ten months old hanging in a shawl upon her neck. Its little blue-black head reaches her shoulders, and its small feet appear below the blue rebozo (shawl), in which it seems to be sitting. They all look awfully, hopelessly poor; the wind is cold—as it so often is during December in Mexico City—nevertheless, these people only wear calico, and even that thin covering is torn and tattered. Watch them, however! They go up to a little booth before the church door and buy a couple of candles, one for the man and one for the woman. They do not even pause to rest or deposit their bundles, so great is their haste to reach the shrine. They enter the lower church—for here are two, as at Lourdes—and after dipping their fingers in the holy water and crossing themselves—particularly on the face, which seems to be an Indian characteristic—they proceed to crawl on their knees up the aisle to the altar rails. They are only doing what hundreds and thousands of their fellows are doing—what, in fact, is expected of them at the fête of Guadalupe.

What a curious spectacle it is! We went out to the shrine a couple of days previously to see the bulk of the Indians arriving. Such scenes as the above were being enacted every moment. Hundreds were already on the spot, some sleeping curled up in gutters; others dressing their hair, or otherwise employed with the zoology in their raven locks. More were gambling.

The whole scene was an anomaly. Outside the church were a dozen booths, containing gambling tables, where youth and age were betting their halfpence or their dollars. The love of gambling seems born in the Mexican, whether he be of Indian or of Spanish descent. It appears as essential to him as his dinner, more so, in fact. But what a fearful thing it is—what a curse to mankind. Look at those people's faces; see that boy gathering up his silver coins to go and get drunk on pulque. He has won more dollars in a few minutes than he ever saw in all his life before, and his newly-acquired wealth will be his ruin. See that old woman's shaky hand as she takes her cigar from her mouth and watches the roulette ball spin round and round; her last cents

staked on the chance. Look at those two small children, who, instead of spending the few centavos given them for sugar-cane, are risking them on this game of hazard. The same anxiety, the same nervousness, is noticeable among these poor Indians that one sees in the bejewelled gamblers at Monte Carlo; but of the two, Guadalupe is the more horrible, for these folk have come on a pilgrimage to Heaven, yet turned aside enticed by Hell!

Just as now, the same scene was enacted on that day of rejoicing at the success of General Diaz, but there was one exception. Then the purses of the people and the pockets of the soldiers were empty, and gambling was accordingly limited. It went on, of course, for Mexican blood must gamble, but it took more the form of barter, a hat for a belt, a pot for a rosary, and so forth.

Booths are everywhere at Guadalupe; queer pottery, coloured handkerchiefs, fruits or dried meat, baskets, candles for the shrines, even bottles of sacred water, just again as at Lourdes, and pilgrims purchase pictures of the Virgin to decorate their bamboo huts, or to hang above the sacred altar in their humble dwellings.

They have wonderful faith. The only thing they love and dread is their religion. They are powerless in the hands of the priests, who rule them by fear.

The most interesting part of the festival was undoubtedly the night before the chief ceremony. When we reached the Zocolo, or Plaza Mayor, in Mexico City, about half-past six, it was to find every tram to Guadalupe crammed to overflowing. Some of the pilgrims who had arrived late were expending their few cents in an electric tram-ride out to the famous shrine. After walking hundreds of miles with shoeless feet, the Indian availed himself of the advantages of modernity, and completed his journey in an electric carriage. Yet another of the vagaries of Mexico. It was really a wonderful sight to see hundreds of people trudging along the road on foot to the Guadalupe festival; rows and rows of carts of every shape and form, all heavily laden, crawled along in solemn procession. A number of burros (donkeys) were ridden, in many cases pillion fashion, by the more wealthy folk. On the left-hand side was a series

Primitive booths.

Photo by COX.]

Guadalupe pilgrims.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Modern Indians in ancient dress.

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of shrines where the pilgrims stopped to pray, as the soldiers had so often done when marching to the capital. In many respects that procession of humanity reminded me of the crowd arriving at Oberammergau to see the Passion Play.

It was a perfectly dark night, and the lights from Indian fires shed strange shadows and illuminations on the scene. Many groups were seated round small earthenware pots, about the size of a soup-plate, in which a few knobs of charcoal were burning. One of the party was wont to kindle the tiny flame with a fan made of plaited grass. When it was properly ignited, she would put her flat tin on the top, and warm tortillas for the evening meal. By way of extra luxury a little honey was spread over the tortilla, or a few scraps of goat meat rolled inside with a chili. The Indians had the quaintest way of illuminating the scene. Three sticks, a couple of feet long, were made into a standing tripod. On the top of these a stone, brick, or piece of tin was placed. A few shreds of wood were then loosely scattered upon it, and when ignited, made a brilliant blaze.

The Indians were sitting around on their heels, sometimes cross-legged like the Arabs, but always in what appeared uncomfortable positions. The weird flames of light, the colouring of the serapes, the white cotton shirts, and the dark skins of the people, made a strange and wonderful picture.

In front of the basilica was a blaze of light, all the more strange in th' general gloom. The towers of the church were illuminated from ıside with Bengal lights, coloured red, white and green, to represent the flag of Mexico. It all added effect to a remarkable scene, for the towers of flame rose high in the air, with the darkness of night for a background, and below was that queer medley of humanity with its small bonfires and funny little trestled lights.

At 7.30 the service in the church was to commence ; the fires were extinguished a few minutes before that hour, bags and bundles collected, and into this vast and sacred edifice the greater portion of the assembly proceeded.

Mexican Indians are most terrible thieves ; such thieves, in fact, that they actually steal amongst themselves, and thus it

is that man, woman and child had to convey into the church all their worldly belongings. These generally consisted of a blanket, sombrero, little wooden tripod for the fire, perhaps a couple of pots, and possibly a handkerchief in which tortillas were tied in a bundle. Not only did they take all their worldly goods and chattels to the service, but their dogs, or an occasional parrot, accompanied them, and that Mass was certainly one of the strangest and most weird celebrations that could be imagined.

The cathedral is a handsome edifice. It represents wealth and splendour. The massive balustrades are of solid silver; the candelabra hanging from the ceiling are beautiful, and on this occasion some thousands of candles shed a lurid glow on all around. The priests in gorgeous robes, the decorations of flowers and palms, the quantities of incense giving a cloud-like mysticism to the scene, told of wealth unbounded, while kneeling upon the stone flags in various stages of poverty and abject rags were the Indians. Oh, how poor they were!

I noticed that these people invariably laid their hats upon the stones, and the brim being eight or ten inches wide, they knelt upon that, evidently preferring the soft plaited straw or felt to the hard flags. Many of them took their bundles off their backs, and calmly placed them in front, settled their dog beside them, and, having prepared for their comfort during the service, proceeded to cross themselves, and begin their devotions.

The enthusiasm of these people was extraordinary. Rags and religion were on every side. Some folk said their prayers with their arms outstretched, evidently an extra penance. Others crept up to the chief altar upon their hands and knees. But the absorption and reverence of all was marvellous. Amongst them were some wonderful types of Indians—exactly the class one sees in picture books—dark of skin, fine of profile, and yet with a sort of wicked devilment about them that denoted ill. Many of the women wore the old Indian dress consisting of two articles, a sort of scarf used for a petticoat wrapped round the body, and tied in a knot at the side, leaving an opening through which the limbs could be seen, and a square kind of cloth with a hole in the middle (called *gaban*,

Photo by RAVELL.]

Types of Mexican Indians.

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His little all.

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or *jorongo*) through which they pass the head. This body covering, closely resembling a towel, simply hangs down before and behind, leaving the arms bare, and as it is not fastened in at the waist, the body can usually be seen. It is hardly a sufficient covering for a cold night. Yet these poor tatters are all the people possess, and whatever their poverty they are always picturesque.

Tied in a bundle on her back, every woman present had a baby. The number of babies at Guadalupe seemed extraordinary. Every female, whatever her age, appeared to have one slung on her, and, as if that were not enough to carry for miles, she generally had bundles two or three times the size of the child added to her burden. Of course, the infants cried ; as an accompaniment to the music there arose a constant wail from babyhood in Church.

After the service was over, the church soon emptied. With solemn pomp a little blind was dropped over the famous picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, on which miraculous painting but a moment previously the glow of innumerable candles had fallen. The crown of jewels ceased to shine and sparkle ; the solemn chants of the priests were hushed ; the faithful knelt no longer on the bare stone flags. Night had spread her ebon wings.

Many persons have described that famous ride from the shrine of Guadalupe and Diaz' entry into Mexico City to me.

He was forty-six, just in the prime of life, health and strength. Well-mounted, sitting erect, his head raised high, his dark face bronzed with the rigours of camp life, he made a fine figure as he rode in front of his staff, well in view of the populace. He was dressed in his General's uniform, and was followed by a large contingent of the Revolutionary army.

People came out of the city and gathered along the roadside. The greeting was not unmixed with cries of dissent. The crowd cheered, the crowd hissed, for there were persons in Mexico City on that day who had no reason to congratulate themselves on the success of the victor. Hot spirits were roused,

and the populace fought amongst themselves. General Diaz rode on, taking small heed either of the cheers or the dissentient cries which rent the air.

As he left Guadalupe, with the queer little shrines on either side of the country road, and passed through the streets of the city, the demonstration was more friendly. By the time he reached the great square of the Zocolo endless cheers greeted him. The Plaza was packed in front of the cathedral. The best of the Mexican populace was gathered there. Indians of every tribe were squatting or standing, all feeling that something was to happen, though few knew exactly what. Women carried their babies on their backs, men dragged older children by the hands, or sat under the shade of the trees in front of the cathedral opposite the Palace.

Roars of welcome rose from the multitude. Southern blood mixed with the Latin race runs through the veins of the Mexicans, and once roused to excitement and emotion they lose control of themselves. Thus it was that day. Hats were thrown on high in the great open square, red rebozos (blankets) were waved overhead; men, women and children shouted in acclamation, while General Diaz, with the face of a stoic, acknowledged their greetings with dignity. Applause stimulates a strong mind just as it throws a weak one off its balance.

He paused to salute. Again and again he raised his hand to his sombrero, and then, turning to the left, entered beneath the porch of the Palace which supports the balcony, from which he was destined to ring forth the note of Independence for many a long year.

The crowd roared itself hoarse and then dispersed; the soldiers were dismissed, and General Diaz and his little band of followers were left in the old Spanish Palace. His entry was so powerful, so masterful, that many who had previously been against him were hypnotised by the manner of the man, and from that moment became his devoted adherents.

As night fell, the last shout died away, the roar of human voices ceased, and that wonderful stillness of the tropics overcame the heat and turmoil of the day. Darkness came on sud-

denly, a chilly feeling rent the air—the excitement of the day was over, and Diaz remained alone with his thoughts.

What had happened? Was he, the son of an Oaxacan innkeeper, the little boy brought up in poverty, who had practically educated himself, he the rough soldier lad, he the rugged officer to whom Castilian-Spanish was almost unfamiliar—as he had talked Indian in his native home, and still spoke a sort of patois with his men—was he to take up the reins of government? Was he to try and unravel the tangled skein of a century of misrule?

CHAPTER XIV.

A NEW ERA FOR OLD MEXICO.

Nobody had the hereditary right to govern. The country was uneducated. No man had really known what he wanted, and when one among them proved a little stronger than his neighbours he had proclaimed himself Dictator, President, Emperor, or what he fancied.

Mud was immediately hurled at him, and he and his "dynasty" fell over like a house of cards. There had been fifty-two rulers in fifty-nine years, and disorder and revolution prevailed from end to end of the land.

The United States, France, and Maximilian from without, Juárez and the Church from within, had all been waging war. Probably no land was ever less safe for human life, or more unsettled, than Mexico about the middle of the nineteenth century. The great power of the Church and its purse could no longer be counted upon, for both were scattered.

Maximilian and Carlota had left nothing behind them but bankruptcy, pretty names, and romantic history; they had not done one thing in the whole course of the three years to weld the Empire together. Chaos reigned as chaotic as ever. The Government was no more stable than before. The debts were heavier; the prestige of the country even less secure. In a total population of fifteen millions one hundred and fifty different languages and dialects were spoken by the various Indian tribes.

After the French troops left, and as the difficulties of resettling the country which confronted the restored Republican Government became acute, the influence of Diaz in Mexico steadily rose.

Ambition had only been born in him during the years that had passed since he first realised what his country wanted. Conscious that peace and prosperity did not yet exist, Diaz had at last determined to listen to the pleadings of his followers and take office. It is more difficult to retain front rank than to gain it, as he had soon to learn.

He had been a soldier for a quarter of a century, and probably no man ever crowded more personal fighting into that length of time. He had been in more hand-to-hand combats than it has been possible to enumerate in this volume. He had, as we know, been shot many times, and twice seriously wounded. He had on three occasions been made a prisoner, and three times escaped. He had lived a hairbreadth life of excitement and adventure. He was a soldier and nothing else, always most happy when in the saddle, with his rifle to his shoulder, or his sword by his side.

Diaz had excelled in the army, but would and could the rough soldier turn into the ruler of a nation ? Those fifty-two men in fifty-nine years had not succeeded in their attempts to put down disorder. Could he drag the country out of the abyss into which it had fallen, and place it, a well-organised, peaceful and prosperous State, in the front rank of the civilised Powers of the world ?

The key of success is the power of influencing others. Diaz had shown that power among his soldiers, but would he retain it among politicians and financiers ? War made with parsimony would entail peace with prodigality, but where was the money to come from ?

It is all very well to accomplish and achieve in one profession, but it is unusual to repeat the process in another, and for a man nearly fifty years of age to entirely alter his life, his aims, his hopes ; to be thrown among fresh surroundings, other minds, literally begin a new life, and make even a greater success of it than he did of the first, is a remarkable achievement. He had many friends, but he had bitter enemies, and had caused many heartburnings. Men had been jealous of him, and, after all, no hatred equals that engendered by jealousy.

Revenge is more certain to pay its debt than gratitude.

"Was he very ambitious at that time?" I asked a man who knew him well, and served beside him.

"No, I should say not. I don't think ambition had anything to do with it, or ever entered into his calculations. It was simply his extreme love of order. He had his own ideas for the betterment of Mexico, and as no one else seemed capable of bringing that condition about, he stepped in, not so much for his own personal ends as to attain that object."

Subsequent events have proved this to be true.

Mexico's was a risky cause. Nothing but a long line of failures lay behind him. The re-making of a nation, already honeycombed with corruption, was no light matter. Knowing the man I can picture him with his lips set tight, his head thrown back, his nostrils dilated, having once made up his mind to accept office, determined to *do* or *die*.

Many attempts were made against his life in his early days of power, both by ball and poison; plots were formed against him as they had been against all those who had held the chief office before him; treason met him on every side. In some miraculous way Diaz always escaped. To-day he laughs over the "amusing little episodes which really were nothing."

While two Presidents have been shot in the United States, he has gone on calmly sitting in his chair. America guards her President (who himself is never without a pistol in his pocket) with detectives and police numerous enough to make an army, while Diaz goes about with just sufficient soldiers to give dignity to his office, and on unceremonious occasions alone. It is many years since he carried firearms himself, and yet he is perfectly safe from harm.

Nor does he only walk about alone. One day in May, 1905, when he and his son were strolling home one evening, he came upon a fire which had suddenly broken out in the street through which they were passing.

Diaz, in his tweed suit, stopped, directed the firemen, and then seizing the nozzle of the hose in his own hand, proceeded to play it on the flames. He was most energetic in the work, and

discovered when the fire was put out that the house actually belonged to the widow of one of his old and valued officers.

Such acts naturally add to his popularity with the people, who look upon him not only as their ruler but as one of themselves.

Once in power, every officer, every soldier who had ever served with or under Diaz wanted his aid. Even the farmers on whose land he had been quartered came forward with their grievances or requests. There were only four hundred miles of railways in those days, and a soldier, travelling north to south, east and west, had naturally spent nights and weeks in many haciendas. Even to-day the sons and daughters and widows of this kind of people turn up at the public audiences, which are described more fully in a later chapter, with their grievances or demands. Generally the President manages to do something for them, for it is one of his creeds never to forget an old friend, if one does not injure a new one by doing so. It is a strong characteristic this, and one which, if a little more universal, would make the world a good deal happier than it is.

Power is delightful, success has its charm; but both bring their obligations and their enemies. However, Diaz never lost his head. Magnanimity and generosity have ever been his strongest characteristics.

Few nations have fallen so low in the estimation of other nations as Mexico at the time that Diaz took control of its destinies. The world has never seen anything like its revival, and is hardly yet able to appreciate the enormous strides that it has made. Mexico, even to-day, when fast steamships, great railway systems and a network of telegraph lines have linked up the most distant quarters of the globe, is still somewhat remote from the great highways of commerce.

The fact is that its expansion has been overshadowed by that of its vast neighbours in the north. We hear a great deal from the United States of America, the people of which have the happy faculty of always finding some novelty to entertain us. Canada, too, affords many topics to dispute over. To the average European the North American continent consists of the United States and Canada. Southern America is a congerie of

turbulent Republics, with a habit of repudiating debts and treaty obligations. This calls for occasional visits from foreign warships sent to overawe them. Mexico—well, Mexico lies between, spreading itself over the map some hundreds of miles, too well governed to attract attention, too self-contained to require much aid, and too modest to be always advertising itself; therefore, Europe is not as familiar as it should be with Mexican affairs.

It is a country of absorbing interest to those who have travelled through its matchless scenes, have drawn with their breath in the fresh sunny mornings the spirit of its old romance, and made themselves acquainted with its rulers and people; but we cannot all go to Mexico. The tongue spoken is Spanish, which few Europeans are able to read, though English is now obligatory in all the Mexican public schools. Knowing little of the Mexico of to-day, but remembering much of its past misdeeds, Europe is apt to pay it scant justice.

Steadily, persistently, unobtrusively, Mexico has worked out its own salvation. In this it owes nothing to foreign aid, but everything to one man, however much he may deny the fact, who is to-day the pride and admiration of his people—Porfirio Diaz.

I am conscious of the fact that in writing the life of a man like Diaz it is difficult to avoid the charge of hero-worship. People like to find their own heroes for themselves. Diaz fills the part to all who know him. His is the most striking individuality in the Western hemisphere. He has not the force or power of the American President at his command, but his personal influence is immeasurably greater. He is a Mexican before all things—a son of the soil.

He knows the good points of his people, and sympathises with their weaknesses. His military leadership at a time when every man's hand was at the throat of his fellow brought him into intimate acquaintance with their bad points. The good he has developed. The bad he has sought to eradicate by giving men the opportunity, so long denied them when civil war devastated every home, of honest labour and better things. He has won the

admiration of all Mexicans by his military exploits, their respect by his firmness, and their love and esteem by his scrupulous integrity and whole-hearted patriotism.

He is, as his countrymen, now united in one solid party, delight to call him, "the man for Mexico." The good of the nation is the well-spring of all his actions. Better than any of his predecessors, he has realised its needs and knows how to meet them.

It is a remarkable thing that Diaz has never shown favouritism. His warmest friends hold no office, while men he personally dislikes are sometimes put in positions of power if he thinks their services of value to the nation. Many an able ruler has met his doom through his favourites; not so Diaz. His personal impartiality is one of his strongest holds on the people. When first he was President, the country was still divided into two bands, the Liberals and the Conservatives, and he enrolled many Conservatives on his side, including men who had served under Maximilian during the Empire.

Diaz is courteous to all his visitors, and spares no pains to inform them on any subject on which they may seek his assistance, but he will not be interviewed. The irrepressible American journalist who "wants the President to tell him everything about himself" finds no encouragement at the Palace or at Chapultepec. Many of Porfirio Diaz's greatest achievements in matters of administration have been done through the channel of others. He is chary of speech-making, or airing his opinions, and is often content to take the background while others occupy the front of the stage.

It would possibly be rash to say there will never be another revolution in Mexico, but this much is well assured, that the old corrupt system of misgovernment which flourished for so long, and reached its hey-day under the rule of Santa Anna, has gone for ever. Education, the greatly increased knowledge of public affairs, the experience of thirty years of peaceful development, and the truer and nobler patriotism which has been slowly awakened, have made the usurpation of the Mexican State by any military adventurer no longer possible. Mexico before Diaz is

as far removed from the Mexico of to-day as were the methods of the Spanish conquerors, and Montezuma's barbaric rule which they displaced.

No doubt it is a fact which invites reflection, though not unexampled in history, that the man who has wrought so vast a change, and has been the first to lead the Mexican nation along the path of constitutional progress, should have himself attained the supreme power at the head of an armed revolution.

Dictators have been made in this way ; it is, in a sentence, the history of half of the Spanish-American Republics. Monarchs have climbed to Imperial thrones by such means. Diaz, when he rode at the head of his army into the capital and proclaimed himself " Provisional " President, was in fact Dictator, though he had no intention to call himself such, nor of assuming absolute power. It was a new rôle for this life-long servant of the Constitution, but this action is seen, on investigation, to be quite in keeping with his previous record.

That he had been a staunch adherent to constitutional methods, enough has been shown to prove. As a youthful lawyer he had risked his liberty and life at Oaxaca when he cast his vote against Santa Anna and in favour of the Constitution which that notorious President had grossly violated. He had fought for the Constitution when it was threatened by Reactionaries and Clericals ; throughout the Wars of Reform it was the Constitution of 1857 in its integrity that he, on the Juárists' side, strove to uphold.

A dozen chances occurred in Diaz' life when, had he cared to grasp them, he might have seized the Presidency. He steadfastly refused them all, as he had refused the overtures to accept high office from Bazaine and Maximilian. The hesitancy of Juárez to grant the full measure of constitutional liberties had been one of the chief causes of his estranged relations with that illustrious Mexican in his closing years.

A *pronunciamiento* and a revolution placed Diaz in a position of supreme authority in Mexico, but personal ambition was not his object. In his own words, which have been quoted at the head of the previous chapter, he " drifted into it," but

this explanation does not quite satisfy. He was the natural leader of such a movement as that which began with the "Plan of Tuxtepec." His high standing among the Liberals, and the influential support from the masses of the people which he could command, made him indispensable to its success. There was no other man to take the place which he alone could fill.

The movement itself was the logical outcome of the trend of events. Under Lerdo's weak government corruption in the national services and abuses in financial administration had again become rampant, and the country was hastening backwards to the condition of the old, bad Reactionary and Clerical days. So outrageously was Lerdo's so-called second "election" in the autumn of 1876 manipulated that it must have proved to every one who previously doubted that there was no security for national liberty in such hands. It was as a champion to restore the Constitution that Diaz appealed for, and obtained, the suffrages of his countrymen.

A new Mexico was born when Porfirio Diaz assumed the office of Provisional President in November, 1876.

The national credit had been dissipated. The robbery by Márquez, under General Miramón's orders, of 600,000 dollars deposited at the British Legation in Mexico for the payment of English bondholders, was but a typical incident in that soldier of fortune's dishonourable career. The suspension of payment of the debt forced upon Juárez and Congress at the close of the War of Reform brought on the European Intervention. Then came the French occupation, at enormous cost; afterwards Maximilian's Empire, with a further load of debt, sufficient to bear down even a prosperous country.

When Maximilian's Empire was overthrown the Mexicans had about 200,000 men in arms. Some of these were retained in the smaller but efficient army which Juárez, with assistance from Diaz, had at once reorganised. Others gladly returned to their homes and civil occupations. Others, again, without a career in the army to look forward to, without settled habitations, without training or any taste for peaceful industry, took to the mountains, and reinforced the bands of cut-throats and

desperadoes who for many years infested the highways. No man's life was safe from them.

Juárez during his later terms in the Presidency had introduced railways and telegraphs, mostly by the use of American capital obtained under somewhat burdensome conditions. With peace and settled government much more might have been done, but simmering revolution that existed at his re-election in 1872, and open revolt a few months later, which collapsed only with his death, were not calculated to give the foreign capitalist any enthusiasm for Mexican investments. Then came Lerdo's government, with a restoration of some of the old abuses, undoing what little had been accomplished in the way of industrial development, and again revolution and bloodshed.

This was the state of the country when Porfirio Diaz made himself its master, and took upon his shoulders the enormous burden of raising it to an honourable position among civilised states; ruin, absolute and complete, an entire contempt for the law, the public highways controlled by outlaws, all authority ignored, the treasury depleted. Mexico had tried every form of government in turn, republican, monarchical, despotic, and now, ten years after Maximilian's Empire had collapsed, the nation was again split into factions furiously fighting against one another. The foreign investor would, indeed, have been a sanguine person if he had felt confidence in the stability of such a country.

Mexico, in short, had no credit. But it possessed a man, known to the world at that time as a brilliant soldier, but who was to prove himself even greater as a statesman and administrator.

Diaz' first official act after establishing himself in the Presidency was to issue a proclamation, in which he offered the co-operation of the Government in any desirable reform, and called upon all competent men to come forward in the common cause of their country's welfare, whatever might have been the political differences which had hitherto divided them, and assist in the great task of reorganising the State.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]
Man and gourd, with which he extracts pulque (the drink of the country) from the magüe plant.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]
Water carrier.

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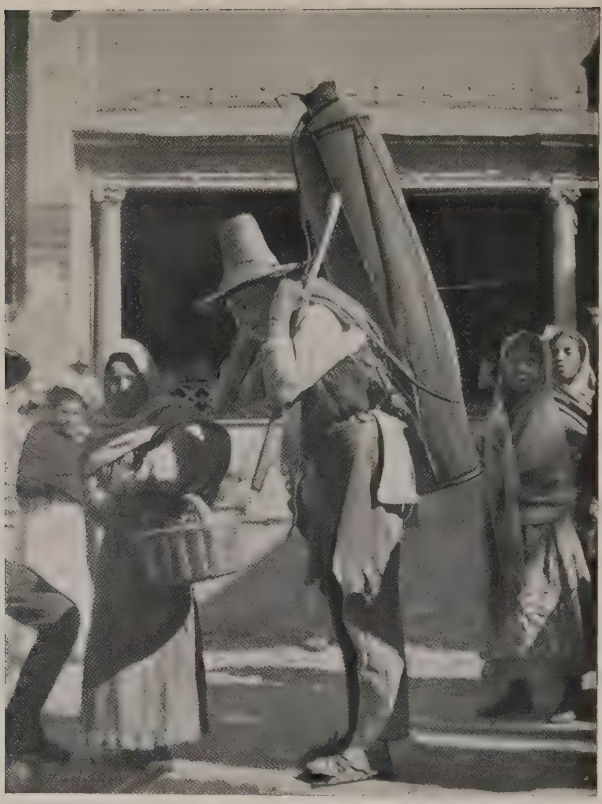

Photos by The AUTHOR.]

Guanajuato water sellers.

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This was the programme which he set before himself:

To establish a lasting peace, so that the arts and industries of Mexico, then crushed and dying, might duly develop.

To enforce respect for the laws upon the people, and to awaken a love of work among them.

To equalise the exports and imports.

To establish and consolidate home and foreign credit, and thereby to open up the great sources of national wealth which the country possessed, and give to the people extended fields of labour.

To initiate and execute great public improvements in the cities, as soon as the public treasury could supply the necessary expenses of the administration.

Mexico City he held in the hollow of his hand, and, knowing the character of his adversaries, the grip was a tight one. The country was still unsettled. Lerdo's disbanded troops remained a menace, and a possible source of future trouble. Diaz left General Mendez in charge of the capital, entrusting him with the executive power, and marched at the head of an army into the interior. His first objective was Guanajuato, from which Hidalgo had struck the first note of Independence, and where Iglesias had attempted to set up his government.

Poor Guanajuato. It is the most picturesque city in Mexico, with a population to-day of nearly 100,000 persons. So recently as June, 1905, there was a terrific cloud-burst over the city. Suddenly the heavens darkened, there were roars of thunder, and a deluge of rain. Horses and vehicles were swept from their feet, and people washed from their beds; and hardly had they recovered from the first shock when tens of thousands of tons of water tore down upon them from the mountain sides, washing, drowning, scattering everything in Guanajuato as it passed. Four hundred homes were swept away, and nearly two thousand people are computed to have lost their lives. One theatre and many public buildings entirely disappeared, and the beautiful new theatre I had admired so much during my visit to the town had thirty feet of water in its auditorium. Luckily, such cloud-bursts are almost unknown. Guanajuato

is very typical of Mexico; while boasting a theatre of which any European town might be proud it is still absurdly simple in many ways, and the water-carrier plies his trade there even now.

From Guanajuato General Diaz continued his march to Guadalajara, famous for its beautiful and artistic Indian pottery, where a strong division of troops under Ceballos had concentrated, whose intentions towards him were uncertain.

There was, however, to be no fighting on a big scale, and Diaz' rule was peacefully established over the country. In less than three months he was back in the capital. Lerdo's troops had been swept out. Outlaws captured red-handed were shot with no ceremony. Riots were put down with severity; and examples were made among the more turbulent elements of the population well calculated to convince them that respect for authority was, in the new order of things, the most profitable course for themselves.

The new President began his sway with an iron hand. He knew his people, and that to forcibly clear the land of bandits and revolutionaries and then control the remaining populace was the only possible mode of governing them. It was not Republicanism, it was despotic paternalism at the best; but it suited the country. The people feared him; they knew his strength and felt his power, and now, little more than a quarter of a century later, he merely beckons and they follow, such is the universal esteem and respect in which General Diaz is held.

A new Congress assembled in April, 1877, and in May Diaz was formally elected Constitutional President. That is nearly thirty years ago. Then the official palace became a kind of political soldier-garrison. To-day it is the headquarters of peaceful law, where a simple court is held. He did not care for society, neither had he time to mingle in it, so for four years he set himself to politics as assiduously as in earlier days he had devoted himself to soldiering.

On his march through the country on a mission of pacification, when burdened with a thousand anxieties, he yet found time to grapple with the most pressing of all national questions—the

restoration of Mexican credit. The bright future which he foresaw for his native land in an era of commercial and industrial development he knew full well would never be attained while Mexican insolvency remained a bye-word among nations. The uplifting of the country, whatever the sacrifice, he made the keystone of his policy.

The restoration of national credit was placed in the forefront of his first message to Congress, which contains this announcement :

" On the 31st of January last the term fixed for the payment to the United States Government of the sum of 300,000 pesos expired, this amount being the first instalment of the balance that was assigned to that country by the mixed Commission formed by the Convention of July, 1868.

" The ruined state of the public Exchequer when the capital was first occupied, the funds required for the urgent needs of the recent campaign, and the amount of business occupying the Administration, made the fulfilment of that inviolable promise an impossibility ; but the Executive, undertaking at all costs to redeem the national honour, imposed a necessary, though grievous tax on the people of the Republic and her servants, and were able in time to settle this great difficulty, and make the payment with the most scrupulous punctuality.

" This national sacrifice will not be in vain ; it will contribute to the good name of Mexico and raise her foreign credit."

Elsewhere in the message he refers to the subject in this passage :

" The consolidation of our Public Debt, the payment of interest on the same, and the foundation of a sinking fund is a necessity to our country. This question will be met by a proposal which the Secretary of the Exchequer will lay before the legislative power. Such steps are of the utmost importance for our national credit."

Is Diaz a great financier ? it may be asked. How comes it that this man has been able to obtain the money necessary

for the accomplishment of his vast schemes for regenerating his country, and has raised a bankrupt State with a history of half a century's turmoil and bloodshed to the position of first among all the Spanish-American Republics? With Mexican 5 per cent. Bonds quoted at 101, and 4½ per cent. Treasury Notes at 100, Mexican credit to-day stands higher than that of any other of the Republics.

The reason of Diaz' astounding success is open and patent to all.

For the first time in Mexico's troubled history he brought the most scrupulous honesty into every department of the public administration. Diaz was never a rich man himself, and to-day, after a long life spent in the service of his country, he possesses but a modest fortune. His methods were a revelation to politicians of the school of Santa Anna, trained to regard the public funds as a legitimate source of plunder.

Mexico must needs have been a wealthy country, or she could never have withstood the drain made upon her resources during all those years, when Dictator after Dictator made it his first care to seize the public exchequer and provide a comfortable future for himself against the time when he should in turn be overthrown. The roll of Mexican Presidents from the first days of Santa Anna who had fled into exile, taking every penny they could lay their hands upon, must be a long one.

Nor was corruption confined to headquarters. In Mexico no man's future was safe. In a land where to be prosperous was to be marked out for burdensome "levies" for the support of this or that political cause, and where politics afforded the most ready means for the rapid accumulation of riches, it is not to be wondered at that the civil administration was anything but impeccable. Governors of States were known to build up fortunes which could not have been made from the savings of their meagre salaries. Never had an Army Colonel "pronounced," nor had a "plan" been organised, but the money for its support was available from some mysterious source. And the example set in high quarters was naturally followed by the lower officials.

Diaz set himself against corruption in every form. He realised that he would never get honest administrators unless the Republic was itself scrupulous in the fulfilment of its obligations towards them. In his first year, though pressed for money for a hundred objects, he managed to pay up every peso of the long arrears due to the public officials, and thenceforward made arrangements which ensured that their claims should be met with punctilious regularity.

He drove men out of office, replaced them sometimes by new and untried officials, and kept a watchful eye on all departments of the public accounts. No doubt he made mistakes, but he inaugurated a new era of capable and honest administration from which Mexico is deriving the benefit to-day.

Hitherto Diaz had been known to the world chiefly as a brilliant soldier, but he was not without experience of civil affairs. His administration of Oaxaca had been a model for other States. All through the long upheaval of the War of Reform and the French Intervention he had kept his accounts, and, as he has told us in his diary, was able to hand over a balance to the Juárez Government. When he was engaged in besieging Mexico City against the last expiring effort of Maximilian's followers he was able to raise a loan from foreign merchants, who trusted solely to his well-known scrupulousness in fulfilling every obligation which he undertook.

Restoration of the national credit was a great thing, but it was not all.

Mexico required not only confidence abroad but internal peace. This would never be assured so long as bands of outlaws and assassins roamed the land. Dealing with these men was a problem of difficulty. They were the product of their time and country. They were bandits because their fathers and grandfathers had been bandits before them, and had known no other life.

General Diaz tackled them in a manner which would have been impossible in any other country. They formed excellent material, if it could be turned to good account. They were men of fine physique, used to a hard life, trained to withstand the

most tiring marches, and knowing every hill and dale in the land. Hitherto they had plundered on their own account, fed the armies of revolutions, and been a strong force for good or ill—generally the latter.

Men there were among them with many crimes to their account. They met with short shrift when caught; only sufficient grace to give the time needed to line them up against an adobe wall and allow them one glance down the muzzles of the rifles. Stern measures were called for, and were dealt out. Repression did its work, and for the first time the public highways began to show some reasonable measure of safety; but still many hundreds of the bandits remained at large.

Undoubtedly their existence formed one of the most serious questions Diaz had to face. Nothing and nobody was safe from their attentions. Even if the leaders were shot their following remained, and Diaz saw it was impossible to restore law and order under such circumstances. A brilliant thought struck him.

"What do you earn?" he asked.

"Average so many dollars a week."

"Then I will give you so many dollars more if you give up your present life and become respectable citizens."

This was the line of his bargain with them. He offered amnesty, with something they had never experienced before, namely, regular and well-paid employment. They would be drafted into a rural police, and given pay at a higher rate than any other cavalrymen in the world. These men, the fomenters of disorder, revolution, theft and riot, were henceforward to devote their energies to subduing disorder.

The bandits accepted his proposal, and thus was formed the force of *Rurales* one meets in Mexico, who are to-day the pride and the pick of the Mexican army, and the admiration of the whole Continent.

No finer body of men could be found. They are now the backbone of the country. They have no fixed abode. Each State has its band of *Rurales*, and they go where required, or when disturbances and troubles break out, for even to-day such things are not unknown in Mexico. Each State has its mark on the

Rurales, the only body of soldiers of the kind in the world.

Native police.

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Photo by MRS. LUCIEN JEROME.]

El Niño perdido—The lost child. Showing a Mexican policeman.

grey silver-embroidered hat; for example, E° (Estado), Mˢ (de Morelos); the uniform is always grey, with red ties and wide belts; brown leather saddles and bridles from which red tassels dangle; embroidered trousers (*chaparreras*); the *Rurales* are armed with pistols, machete (sword) and rifle.

There are about five thousand of them all told, and as I had an escort of forty during my journeys through the wilder parts of Mexico, thanks to General Diaz' forethought, I can vouch from experience that no braver, more trustworthy, or finer horsemen and marksmen exist. These *Rurales* are most courteous and polite, always thinking of little things for the comfort of anyone they are escorting, and the mere remembrance of my association with them is a pleasure.

To-day, especially in the capital, Mexico also possesses an excellent police force, which has taken the place of those funny old night-watchmen and other heterogeneous personages who interested me much on my first visit to Mexico. The grand houses still retain their old watchmen as pensioners, and there they sit at the door night after night, huddled up in their red blankets, their little lamps beside them, but generally so old and so doddery they would be quite unable to catch a thief, and must cause amusement to the present smart policemen.

A new order of things had already been well established when President Diaz met his first Congress in the September following his election. Nine months had elapsed. In this interval he had been in fact, if not in title, the absolute ruler of Mexico, wielding all the authority of a Dictator. They were months of strenuous exertion for the man upon whom so heavy a burden rested. Mexico to outward appearances was tranquil. But there were elements of disorder long ingrained in the Mexican character which, though held in subjection, were not extinguished. A few outbreaks of hostility against the Government occurred in that and the succeeding year, but they were put down before anything in the nature of a serious rising had time to come to a head.

There were many who looked upon Diaz as a man and not

as the Government of Mexico ; merely one more in the long list of individuals who had attempted to rule an unruly nation ; who would air his authority for his brief day and then disappear like the rest. They were mistaken. They did not realise that he was something more than a man—a system. There was to be no going back. In welcoming Congress Diaz said :

" The assembling of Congress to-day for the despatch of business has a double and important signification. It not only marks a division between the abnormal state of things which now completely ceases and the full constitutional era that has begun, but it definitely seals the legality of the revolutionary actions of the Revolution of Ajutla, from which sprang our great Code of 1857. It is therefore my duty, and it is a duty which I fulfil with pleasure, to congratulate you on your presence here, which inaugurates an epoch of regeneration and prosperity for the Republic."

Mexico, however, had still to perform her promises. The United States Government had maintained relations with Juárez in the darkest days when the fugitive President, with little personal following save his escort, was literally being driven by French troops from pillar to post. The Washington Cabinet, however, refused to recognise the Government which Diaz had installed because of its revolutionary origin. Where so intimate a neighbour stood aside, other nations whose sentiments towards the successor of the Emperor Maximilian were less friendly naturally held aloof.

Europe had no interest in Mexico save to ensure that her obligations were met, and the country was kept tranquil in order that trade might develop. The tragedy of Querétaro was still fresh in memory. There was little confidence in the stability of anything Mexican. A certain glamour surrounded the name of Diaz because of his adventurous life and daring exploits, and something was hoped from him, but for the present Mexico remained *suspect.*

None were prepared for the extraordinary evidences of regeneration that the country displayed.

In the first year of Diaz' Presidency there were only 567 kilometres of railway laid down, where now the mileage exceeds 16,285 kilometres. The telegraph had been introduced, but less than 10,000 kilometres were in operation, where there are now over 110,000 kilometres. No country offers greater natural obstacles to the construction of railroads than Mexico, which probably possesses the most mountainous surface in the world that has yet been opened out. Before anybody realised it, Diaz was joining up railways, linking scattered areas by telegraph wires, deepening harbours, making roads, founding schools, and fostering new industries to give employment to the people.

All this feverish activity of industrial development was accompanied by the most rigorous economy in administration. A political matter of the greatest urgency was the consolidation of the different federated States which formed the Republic of Mexico. The ties which bound them together and to the central power were of the loosest description. They had enjoyed almost unrestrained liberty to encourage their separate interests and rivalries. Every ambitious politician who "pronounced" and who duly paid court to the separatism fostered by one or other of the States could depend upon its sympathies, and thus use the territory as a base in his attempt to overthrow the executive.

This was a danger which in past years had assisted materially in keeping the country in a turmoil. To bring the various States into more intimate relations and to make their interests alike, while at the same time extending by constitutional means the authority of the central power over them, was one of the first tasks to which Diaz devoted his attention.

As a diplomatist he was cautious. He was trained for the law, but his life from youth upwards had been that of a soldier. For a very brief spell he had sat in Congress in Mexico City, but, as already told, he left the Congress Hall in hot haste to lead his troops against General Márquez, who was attacking the capital. In truth, a life of such absorbing activities as his had been had left him little time to gain experience either of law or of constitutional government.

The reduction of the army went hand in hand with peaceful development. At the close of the revolution nearly every available man had been under arms on one side or another. The large army which had been so great a burden on the national finances was brought down to moderate proportions. A good officer, no matter what his political record had been, Diaz was careful to retain. The fusion of elements which had hitherto been in conflict was a task calling for great tact and skill. It was successfully accomplished, and very few years passed before Mexico possessed a national army in the true sense of the word.

Necessarily taxation remained high. But Mexicans saw almost for the first time that they were getting some return for their money. Old abuses had been swept away. Public security had been established all over the land. The national revenues, which in 1877 amounted to $16,000,000, for the fiscal year 1879–80 exceeded $21,000,000. Exports had increased in the same period from less than $24,000,000, to upwards of $32,000,000. The scrupulous payment of every debt was made the first object of the President's Government. With prosperity growing by leaps and bounds, the Ministry was able gradually to lighten the burdens borne by the people.

Before his four years' term of office had been completed Diaz was able to inform Congress of enormous public works for the development of Mexico's resources that he had carried out or set in hand. The telegraph wires were extended across the country from Tepic to Rosario ; to Monterrey and further northwards towards the frontier ; southwards towards Guatemala ; and east and west in every direction.

Railways binding up the disjointed States were designed like a network over the country. A contract had been approved for a line which, starting from the capital, would pass through Querétaro, Leon, Zacatecas and Chihuahua to the northern frontier ; and two others would be threading areas northward with the same objective, and the intention of opening up the country and fostering trade with the United States. Another was in progress across the country through Guadalajara to the Pacific.

The Mexican Cable Company had contracted to lay a cable from a point in Texas to Vera Cruz, joining up with Europe.

The nucleus of a navy was created by the arrival of three coastguard vessels constructed in the United States, for the Mexican Government, for service at the seaports in repressing contraband and protecting trade. Mexico, however, made no pretensions to formidable power on the seas.

In those four years Mexico was rising out of the ashes of revolution to her proper place among the States. The Cabinet at Washington at last, in the year 1879, formally recognised the Diaz Government, and despatched a representative to Mexico City; a friendly state of affairs no doubt helped by the punctuality with which Mexico's debts to the United States had been paid. The Central American Republics established a joint Minister for Guatemala, Salvador, and Honduras. The Argentine Federation nominated a Consul-General.

Spain, forgetful of her old sores, established a Legation in the capital, and her Sovereign invited Mexico to take part in the international conference for the consideration of proposals for preventing breaches of international jurisdiction at sea. France, remembering Maximilian's Empire only as an episode in her history, and with friendly feelings towards a sister Republic which showed such great promise, opened up negotiations for the establishment of relations between herself and Mexico, which were concluded to the mutual satisfaction of both countries.

It was a record of administration of which nations that lay claim to the most rapid advancement might well be proud. All this had been done by a people who in the past had been singularly lacking in public enterprise, feeling no security for their future, and little confidence in their rulers.

And this was the work of one man, Porfirio Diaz. At a time when his strong grasp of affairs seemed indispensable for the continuation and fulfilment of the policy of consolidation and development which he had begun, the best elements in Mexican public life learnt with some feeling of dismay that he was passing over the headship of the State to a new man.

In declining the overtures made to him to submit himself for re-election to the Presidency under a new *régime* Diaz was but fulfilling a pledge he had made in the most solemn form when assuming power. Moreover, the constitutional principle involved was one to which he had consistently adhered throughout the whole of his public life. He had told Congress in the first message he had sent :

" One of the most solemn promises given by the Revolution was that in future the rule of the ineligibility of the President of the Republic and of the Governors of the States for re-election should have the force of supreme law. I am glad, citizen deputies, to take the only part I can conscientiously take in the fulfilment of the obligation contracted with the country by sending to you, as I will do to-morrow, by the Government Secretary, the text of this law.

" It rests with the legislative power of the Union and the Legislatures of the States to make this rule a law of the Constitution."

The law had been re-affirmed at his own instigation, and he was not going to be the first to violate it. It was a grievous disadvantage to Mexico to lose at this moment the services of the man who held the entire country in guiding strings, and on whose personal initiative so much depended, but that was a price which had to be paid for Republican institutions. Republicanism may have certain advantages, but those of us who live under a monarchy may find some consolation in realising that it is not without its limitations.

The re-election of the President for a second term had been the most constant source of revolution in Mexico. In this way nearly every Dictator's reign had come to an end in the early days of the Republic. Juárez' election for the second time had only been brought about in the throes of the War of Reform, and a vote of Congress had been necessary to legalise it. Even his great influence could not subdue the clamour which arose when he put himself forward for his last term of power. Lerdo's mere threat to stand again precipitated a bloody conflict. Diaz was well advised in his own interest to have nothing to do with it.

Eight candidates sprang forward to grasp the power which Diaz willingly relinquished. In September, 1880, General Don Manuel González was declared to have been elected President of the Republic.

González was not really a blood relation, as many supposed. He and Diaz were *compadres*, a spiritual form of relationship of a binding nature described in the first chapter of this book. They were brothers in the Church, so to speak, and therefore custom and society demanded the strictest confidence, consideration, and affection between the two.

It was during the *régime* of González, the temporary ruler, that a surprising romance entered into the life of General Diaz, so we will leave war and strife, politics and government alone for a while, and see how a woman changed a man—how a child moulded a veteran soldier.

CHAPTER XV.

THE INFLUENCE OF A WOMAN.

THE story of the Consort of the President is a romantic one. We were driving one afternoon out to the summer castle of Chapultepec, when I asked Madame Diaz how she first met the General.

"When I was a little girl I had an American governess," she replied, "but after some years she married, and an English one took her place. We used to go for long walks together, and talk in English on many subjects. I was only a child then, and my father was a warm follower of President Lerdo, and therefore altogether against General Diaz, but I knew all about him, and my governess and I used to discuss how brave he must be, and we both grew very fond of him—in theory. His name was not allowed to be mentioned at home, so I gazed at his portraits and the pictures of his battles, where he was represented riding at the head of his troops, and felt sure he must be nice, because he looked so kind, and yet so strong and brave; but I never saw him.

"Time went on. He made his entry into Mexico City in 1876. Señor Lerdo was turned out, my father's party was overthrown, and General Diaz elected President. Oh, how interested I was in it all! The governess used to read the papers, and tell me all about that famous ride into Mexico City and the subsequent events, and as we walked to and from Chapultepec—the very road along which you and I are now driving—I always hoped that chance might place me in his way. My childish enthusiasm for him grew, but still we did not meet.

"After he had been President four years he went out of

Photo by VALETTO.]

Madame Diaz, wife of the President of Mexico.

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The President's private house in Cadena, Mexico City.

[*Page* 287.

office, and as soon as his duties were lightened he moved a good deal in society. Then, at one of my first balls, I met my hero.

"I was still very, very young, and I hardly thought he would even take the trouble to look at me. But he did. We were introduced, and I remember now my excitement over that meeting. I was tongue-tied with shyness; but he seemed so kind and gentle that I liked the human man even better than I had liked the phantom one."

In this psychological hour, at the most critical moment of the President's career, the right figure crossed his path. Diaz had already attained enormous success in pacifying the country and laying the foundations of its present strength, but he was surrounded by people on whom he could not always rely.

Parasites were on every side. Those who were openly hostile to him were less to be feared than those whose enmity was concealed, and there were men whom he had raised to positions of trust in his first term of office who would have hesitated at little to put themselves in his place. It was a trying position for any one, even a man of such reserve, such nerve force, a man so strong. His was a strenuous life, without any relaxation or repose. Now, although he enjoyed greater liberty, he did not really care for society; he dared not trust society in which he was an alien. And so, in the midst of his great success, of his popularity and power, General Diaz appears to have stood absolutely alone.

In the same town lived an able and distinguished lawyer, Don Manuel Romero Rubio. This man had three daughters, all good-looking girls. One, the eldest, was dark and Spanish in appearance; but instead of the languishing sleepy eyes of many Spanish beauties, the child Cármen had a quick glance, in keeping with her quick intelligence. She was particularly well educated for a Mexican of Spanish descent, for alas! it is only of recent years that much time and thought have been spent on the education of women. Of medium height and pretty figure, with neat hands and feet, and swan-like neck, Cármen walked daily with her English governess.

It was the fashion in Mexico at that time to have weekly gatherings known as "Cotillon Balls," and it was at one of these that Porfirio Diaz met Cármen Rubio. His friends declare that he fell in love with her at first sight, for from the moment he saw her he was most assiduous in his attentions, and by the third or fourth ball every one felt sure he had met the wife of his choice.

She was a dainty, well-born, highly educated girl; he a rough soldier of humble origin and simple ways.

Naturally Cármen appeared to him the very embodiment of grace and charm. Her pretty interest in the hero of the hour flattered him, her lovely eyes and delightful manners fascinated him; she seemed to have everything that he had not. But still, drawn towards her as he was, he felt he had no right to think of her other than a pretty child and the daughter of a political adversary.

Fate is stronger than wisdom. These two people were made for each other. Thus it was chance brought them together, and at the time when Porfirio Diaz was necessarily much alone, although constantly surrounded—and there is no such loneliness as the loneliness experienced in a multitude—he met dainty, bright, cheery Cármen Rubio. There is no doubt he at once felt the superiority of the girl over all others in Mexico City; superiority of looks, superiority of education, superiority of temperament; and he fell in love. Yes, fell madly, desperately, passionately in love with a young girl considerably less than half his age.

It was a veritable romance. It overwhelmed him like an avalanche, swept him from his feet, and drove him swiftly along with an overpowering passion. Love is a bundle of incongruities. Love and hate are the light and shade of human existence. Diaz experienced both at that time.

She was caught up in the meshes of her childlike hero-worship, for Cármen Rubio had adored him in a girlish, romantic sort of way before they ever met.

He had felt the want of the love and sympathy of a bright companion, and yet one who was more educated and in

a higher position socially than himself, during those four burdensome years of office. No woman ever influenced a man's life more gradually, and yet more completely, than Cármen Rubio did that of Porfirio Diaz. In her he found that sympathy he wanted, in her he could confide, in her he realised that gentle refinement of thought and manner lacking in the rough camp life he had experienced. Nothing could have been more fortunate than their marriage, nothing more happy than their union. Each strengthens the character of the other, both are full of love and sympathy. Porfirio Diaz to-day would not be the refined, gentle, human, kindly, sympathetic being that he is, had he not linked his life with Cármen ; a fact which he himself is the first to acknowledge.

They have been married now for nearly a quarter of a century. Matrimony often expects too much and gets too little, but they are chums and friends to-day, companions and helps in a way it is truly delightful to see. All their thoughts are in sympathy ; the wife brings the sunshine into the husband's life. She is an excellent housekeeper, and runs her homes with the best taste and strictest economy. She knows just enough of the affairs of State to be interested, but not to bore by questions.

" I never ask anything about politics or that sort of thing," she said to me one day. " If my husband tells me, I know he wants me to know, and if he does not, or seems tired and bothered when he comes in from the Palace, I feel instinctively that something has gone wrong, and the best medicine is change of thought, so we talk of other things."

This shows the wisdom of the woman, but then, tact is her strong point, and therefore it is that so many tales of woe are poured into her sympathetic ear, and she heals as many family breaches in a year as he negotiates affairs of State.

Numerous romances hover round the name of Diaz, but unfortunately the pretty little story of his being married by proxy in his early youth is but fiction. Such marriages were formerly quite common in Mexico before the days of railways, and are not uncommon even now. A certain well known lawyer lived in

Mexico City, and a certain lovely girl, named Agustina Castallo, lived on the borders of the Gulf of Mexico at Tampico, famous for its port and its tarpon fishing. There was no communication by train in those days, and they were married by proxy. That is to say, a great friend of the man represented him with a power of attorney in Tampico, and a civil and ecclesiastical marriage by proxy took place. On the arrival of the bride in Mexico City many days later, she and her husband went to the registrar together and signed the books, being again united in person by the priest.

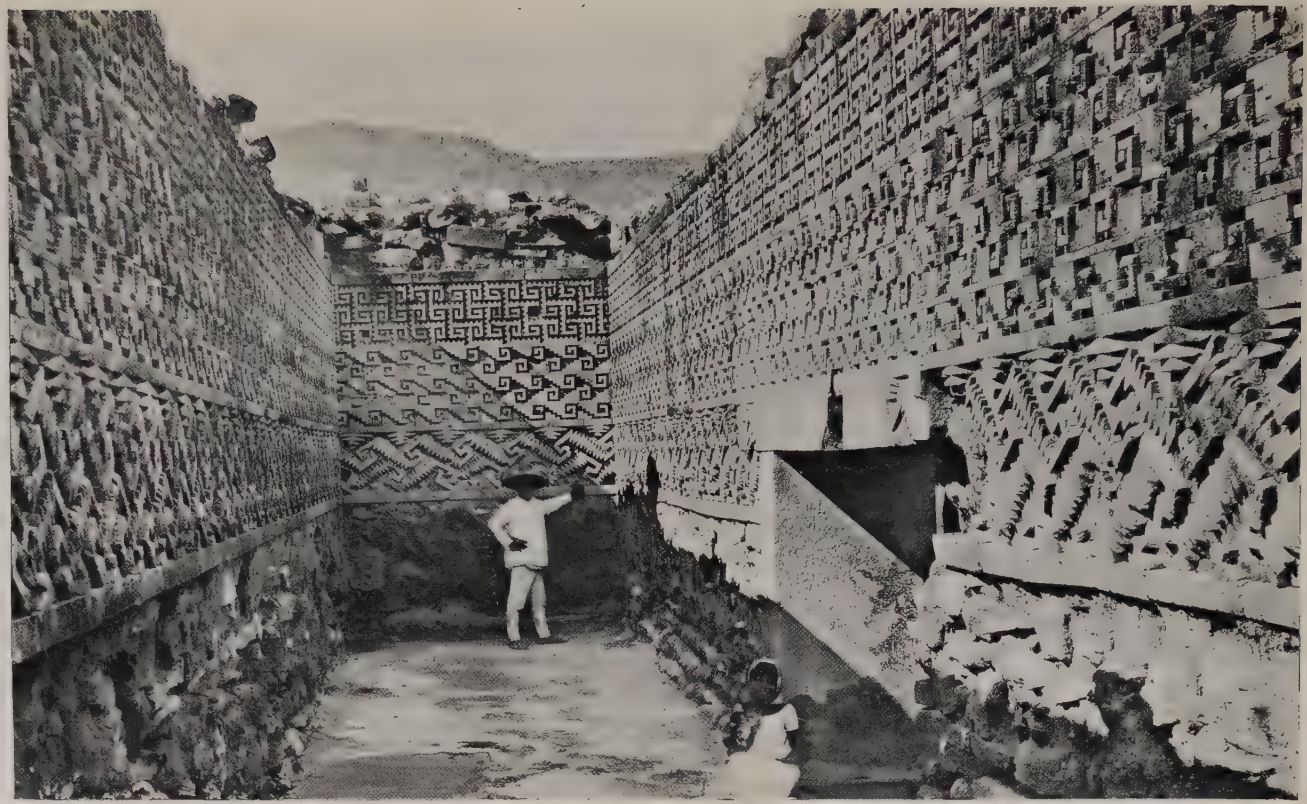
That man and that woman were the father and mother of the present wife of the President of Mexico.

It was during the time he was out of office, in the spring of 1883, that General Diaz married the beautiful Cármen, now the idol of the Mexican people, by whom she is known as "Cármelita," or the "dear little Cármen."

Attached to the Palace is an official residence for the President. Lerdo had lived there; and Diaz had lived there. González, too, lived there; but when Diaz came back to power the newly married couple were so comfortably settled in their own home in the street known as Cadena that they decided to remain where they were, as the Presidential term of office was only four years. Now those four years have drawn out until General Diaz has been elected for his seventh term, and for a period of six years.

Shortly after their marriage they went back to his native town, where Diaz had accepted the post of Governor.

They led a very happy life during the nine months spent in Oaxaca in those days. They were not well off, and had a simple home. The ex-President spent his spare hours in the saddle, or shooting in the mountains. In these expeditions Cármelita did not join him. It was not the custom for Spanish women to share in men's sports, and although Madame Diaz was educated far in advance of the majority of Mexican women, and was a most capable linguist and well read, she had no knowledge of how to handle either a horse or a rifle, and no inclination



Hall of Mosaics, Mitla.

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Chinese god found in a tomb, Huehnetlan, State of Oaxaca. The figure is in bronze, and sits two and a-half inches high. Said to be 4,000 years old.

Idols found near Mitla. Generally five in a tomb.

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towards anything of a sporting nature. Even to-day the women in Mexico lead the most secluded lives.

Lack of exercise is ruining the digestion of Mexico, just as over-exercise is ruining the homes of England.

Naturally the General was much among his childhood's friends in Oaxaca, people he had loved all his life. Every stone, every house, was as well known to him as it was new to his child-wife. They drove out a great deal together, for she would not be persuaded to ride pillion as the natives do, and was too fearsome to ride alone.

They visited their friends at haciendas (farms for growing sugar, coffee, maize, tobacco, rubber or rice) in the neighbourhood, entertained Madame's relations from Mexico City; and were constantly in touch with the leaders of the State, and González, the President of the day.

One of their favourite expeditions was to the great ruined temples of Mitla—a wondrous place I visited myself under the most delightful circumstances, as the guest of General Diaz and the State.

These temples and buried cities are chapters in history which, once destroyed, can never be replaced. Mexico ought to guard her ancient ruins as her proudest possessions; they are unique, and not a stone should be spoilt by the hands of modern man. Once defaced—as, alas! nearly all the mural paintings have already been in Mitla—they are gone for ever, and one of Mexico's greatest attractions is lost to the world. The Government, during troubled years, was not vigilant enough in the preservation of her treasures. All this is now changed under the wise *régime* of the present President.

In the solitude of those ruined temples and palaces in that silent valley, we seemed to see the triumphal dance of the Zapotec Indians as they capered round the wretched prisoners of war, always offered up in sacrifice. We could picture their feathered heads and jewels, their breast-plates of gold and weapons of war, such as are depicted in the tiny scrap of painting which yet remains on one of the walls.

The old Mexican MSS. were painted on cotton cloth, prepared

skins, the leaf of the aloe, or a composition of silk and gum. It is a collection of these ancient writings that Lord Kingsborough reproduced in his wonderful work on Mexico. The pictures give some idea of the gorgeous colouring of those days, the fantastic dress of the Indians, and a wealth and splendour that rivalled ancient Rome.

Yes, we seemed to see it all in the evening glow. We could almost hear the cry of the victims whose blood was poured out on that central stone at Mitla, ere their bodies were taken behind the temples to the great banqueting halls for the subsequent feast. We could picture that gorge of human flesh, in which women, alas! joined—for women were well treated in those days, and shared all the joys (?) of their husbands; they were not shut up in any way. On the contrary, they were as free and independent as the Zapotec women of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec are to-day. Polygamy, though permitted, was only usual among the ruling classes.

It is odd to think that when Confucius was teaching the inhabitants of China respect for their already ancient customs, when these Toltecs, Aztecs and Zapotecs were well advanced in civilisation, we northern peoples of Europe were more or less barbarians.

Along that Oaxaca valley are strange caves where people live to-day, just as they do in the centre of Sicily at that old Greek city of Castrogiovanni, the Henna, or Enna, of the ancients. Madame Diaz often visited these cave-dwellers, and it was during those days in Oaxaca she learnt so much of the inner life of the people.

The village of Mitla is almost as interesting as are the ruins themselves. Here dwell the descendants of the very people who built those great temples. They are still most primitive in their manners and customs, chiefly employed in cultivating the soil and tending cattle and sheep. Tiny huts made of bamboo form these Zapotecan dwellings, which contain but one small room, eight feet by twelve being the average size. If these Indians are rich they build a kitchen adjoining, just a tiny place shaped like a tent, on much the same principle as

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Washing at the stream.

Photo by MRS. JEROME.]

Indian child.

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Photo by GARNAT.]

A happy family. The woman is making tortillas (the Mexican form of bread).

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their hut, and here the wife makes her tortillas or does her washing.

One family we visited was quite remarkable. The mother, presumably about thirty, was a well-preserved, handsome woman for her age; and the eldest daughter, a girl of seventeen, could but be considered lovely. She was very small, five feet at most—as are all the Indians—and dark-skinned, her complexion being of a rich nut-brown hue. She was attired in a sort of chemise low in the neck and short in the sleeves, which showed a perfectly-modelled bust; round her throat she wore red coral for luck and some curiously-coloured beads. Her long black hair hung in two plaits, into which red braid had been twisted, so that what fell below her waist was really a tassel of braid. The mother, on the other hand, wore her plaits coiled round her head, and as they were interwoven with bright green wool, this gave the effect of a laurel wreath.

Another daughter's tresses were so long that they lay upon the ground as she stood erect, a by no means uncommon thing with the Indians. Both mother and daughter wore the usual long strip of skirt round the body, and as they had just finished weaving a new one, they exhibited it with great pride. The coarse black material was woven in three narrow strips, which were stitched together with coloured wool; when completed it was nearly a yard wide, its length about eight feet. It had no shape. The girl caught one end between her knees, quickly bound it round her body and caught it in at the waist by a sash-band. This is the usual skirt; but made in a shorter length it does not always fold over so well, hence one often sees the bare leg of an Indian woman. They wear nothing on their feet.

A small personage of two—the youngest of the woman's five children—was dressed in the quaint old fashion of the babies of the district. He had on long white linen trousers and a coat like that of his father; indeed, boys and girls, as soon as they can stand, are dressed exactly like their elders.

He was told to say, "How do you do?" to the lady.

I gave him my hand, and the tiny creature kissed it. His

little lips and hands were so cold that that kiss really gave me a shock; but I suppose Indian blood must be thin and poor, for I never shook hands with any native who felt warm—they always seem to be icy and clammy. There is something almost uncanny about them—snake or fish-like—although they are beautiful in shape and remarkable in carriage. They are poorly clad, and yet they cannot surely feel the cold as we do, or presumably they would alter matters and do something to warm up that chill, thin blood of theirs, and set it circulating more freely through their veins.

Juárez, it will be remembered, was one of the Zapotecan Indians from this particular valley, as were also many of the generals who fought against Maximilian.

It was in those Oaxacan days that General Diaz visited the United States, the second occasion only during all the seventy-five years of his life that he has ever been out of his own country; on the first, when he started from the northern frontier on his campaign against President Lerdo, he only touched at New Orleans, and his return journey nearly cost him his life when his identity was discovered by his fellow-passengers on board the ship.

Such an expedition was naturally an important one, and the object with which it was undertaken was to visit St. Louis and see the bridge built by Captain Eades, who was then negotiating to carry out a plan of his, to put entire vessels on to trains and so run them across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

Eades died, and his plan was never carried through. Thus it is that to-day an English firm, Messrs. S. Pearson and Sons, has re-built the railway from Coatzacoalcos to Tehuantepec, and Selina Cruz.

Although General Diaz was no longer President of Mexico, he had done so much good during his four years of office, and there was such a strong possibility of his return to power, that he was treated in the United States almost as if he were a representative President. He and his wife travelled by coach and carriage to Tehuacán, thence by mule-tram some twenty or thirty miles to Esperanza, where they took the train for

Vera Cruz, continuing the journey by sea to New Orleans. Here they were joined by the Hon. John W. Foster, on behalf of President Arthur. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Foster several times in Mexico, where he had formerly represented the United States. One of the ablest diplomatists of his day, he took a prominent part in the negotiations for peace between China and Japan. There are few men more popular or better known in the United States.

General Diaz and his young wife were met at New Orleans by a private train, with its cars and its drawing-rooms, sent there by the courtesy of the President of the United States. Diaz still speaks enthusiastically of that journey.

"We had a beautiful reception in Chicago," he said to me, "the warmest welcome, lovely flowers, and decorations made with the Mexican flag. Then we went to Washington, where we spent three days, dining at the White House and seeing something of that very beautiful city. We visited New York, Niagara, and Boston, but unfortunately the trip was somewhat hurried, and I did not see as much of America as I should have liked." He hopes to gratify this desire of seeing more of the United States, and something of Europe, at no very distant date.

This second visit with all its pomp and grandeur, its magnificent receptions and warm welcomes, was a very different affair from Porfirio Diaz' former trip across the frontier, with a price offered for his head, ten years before.

Madame Diaz has done much to help the President build up modern Mexico. Her tact, her learning—for she is the most educated woman in Mexico—her charm of manner, her gentleness and kindness of disposition, have won the love and sympathy of the people, and forged still stronger the chain that holds the Republic of Mexico together. She has been her husband's right hand in everything, a fact he unceasingly acknowledges.

Madame Diaz is perfectly delightful. Tall for a Spaniard, possessed of a beautifully slight, graceful figure, extremely good-looking, with dark hair and eyes, pretty manners and gracious ways, she wins all hearts, added to which "Cármelita" speaks English and French fluently.

Her womanly influence came to him at a time when it was no longer necessary to rule with such an iron hand, and she guided him to softer measures and more diplomatic ways.

Nothing is prettier than to see them together. This great ruler throws off his official cares in his wife's presence and becomes her lover. The courtesy with which he greets her, his kindly smile on seeing her, that little appealing way in which he speaks to her, and her charm and deference to him, are indeed pretty to see.

An ideal home-life truly.

My first meeting with the President and his wife was very pleasant. As a rule he sees any and everyone during the official hours at the Palace; but I received a bidding to call at his private home in Cadena through one of his greatest friends the day after my first arrival in Mexico and the presentation of my introductions.

This in itself was a great honour. He had taken me on faith. There was to be no officialism. I was to be met as a friend.

It was an ordeal to look forward to, this reception by the ruler of a nation who spoke no language but Spanish, and who had always been represented to me as one who, report said, did not care much for women. I wished for once I had been a man myself.

My new friends, Señor Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandon, Governor of the Federal District of Mexico, and his lovely wife fetched me from the hotel where I had taken rooms, intending to keep them as a *pied-à-terre* during my long stay in Mexico, for the purpose of writing my first book, and away we bowled in their barouche with a fine pair of English horses and an English coachman.

As we drove up to the simple house in Cadena, the big doors flew open and into the courtyard we clattered.

No one lives downstairs in Mexico. The lower floor is given over to the servants and offices—the coach-house, stables, etc., are all on the ground floor—and the President's home is no exception. We ascended a handsome flight of marble stairs, and reached the first floor, off which all the rooms opened. The

gallery with its flowers and plants was exposed to the elements, which is a strange thing about Mexican homes. Often in winter it is really cold, and the summer is tremendously hot. The sun even on a winter's day gives great heat, but when it is cold, the cold is penetrating. Mexicans, however, though accustomed to warmth out of doors, live with open patios, rarely have a fireplace, and never hot-water pipes; consequently their houses, with polished floors, light furniture, thin curtains, and utterly devoid of artificial heat, are cold in winter, while the bedrooms at night send a chill through one on entering. The natural result of all this is that pneumonia, which often ends in death. is common.

On our arrival, the porter below having rung up, we found a door of the gallery open, and a couple of footmen wearing English livery waiting to bow us in.

We walked round the gallery, and at the end were ushered into the ante-drawing-room, a delightfully pretty little room off which the President's own private sanctum leads. Beyond this small chamber was the large salon, a long, narrow room with several windows opening on the street, and actually possessed of a fireplace with the usual chimney decorations, although, as I subsequently learnt, it has seldom had a fire.

Madame Diaz was already in the room when we entered, and nothing more delightful or more cordial than her greeting, not only to her old friends but to me as a stranger, could be imagined. As soon as she found that her English was better than my Spanish, she kindly conversed in my own language.

A few minutes after our arrival the President himself walked in. With a courtly bow, he said he had never regretted his inability to speak English more than on the present occasion, but that I must forgive him, for he had never had time to learn, though he thought English so essential that it was now being taught in all public schools. He was a great believer in education, he said, but it must come to a nation gradually. Let people read first, and then they want to know more, and learn for themselves. It has been part of his educational system to encourage people to read the newspaper. With this object in

view a daily paper is published in Mexico City which is sold at about one farthing per copy, or half an American cent. So much is this appreciated by the peons that its circulation is over a hundred thousand a day. Surely it must be the cheapest paper in the world. Two or three years ago the sight of a Mexican peasant reading would have been impossible; to-day it is quite common, and in the capital those hundred thousand copies at this cheap rate are read with avidity.

General Diaz has organised an excellent system, under which every Indian must learn to read, write and cipher; higher grades are open for those who wish to profit by them.

"I believe this education will awaken the country, and prove an inestimable boon," he said.

That day we met as strangers, but it was a position which did not last long, as before I left Mexico the situation had so changed that on my return three and a half years later I felt as an old friend being welcomed by the warmest sympathy.

It certainly is a curious thing that such a remarkable man as General Diaz should have married a woman who in her own way is as wonderful as himself. When one realises that Madame Diaz was born and bred in a country where tradition has kept women in the background, where education even among the wealthy is scant, and the children of the poor are far better taught than the daughters of the rich, her learning is remarkable. Yes, this woman is not only a linguist, but she is artistic in her tastes, clever with her fingers, has the manners of a diplomat, the cordiality and grace of a queen, is well read and well up in literature of all countries, to say nothing of taking a keen interest in many subjects. She is a woman who would shine in any country, and, therefore, stands out still more prominently in a land where women are so subservient to men.

This is but a cursory glance of the consort of the President of Mexico. In nothing does she show to greater advantage than as a stepmother. When she married, the President's three children, two girls and a boy, were but little younger than herself; however, from that moment she "mothered" them.

General Diaz' daughter Luz married the late Francisco Rincón

Gallardo, a man of large means, and a member of Congress. They had two children. The other daughter, Amada, married Ignacio de la Torre, one of the most distinguished capitalists of the city, who, besides being a wealthy man, is connected with one of the oldest Spanish families.

The only son, Captain Porfirio Diaz, was born in 1872. Although a man of thirty-three, he looks ten or twelve years younger. Part of his education was obtained in England, where for two years he studied engineering. He married Señora Luisa Raigosa, by whom he has three children. Two of them are boys, so the President has two grandsons who bear his name. He holds a post in the army, but has made no attempt to emulate the military exploits of his father, although they are devoted to one another. His talents lie in other directions, and he has a large practice in engineering and architecture, in both of which subjects he is keenly interested. He works hard, resembling his father in that respect, and he has that gracious, courtly charm of manner for which the President is famous. Captain Diaz is chief engineer to the Mexican Construction and Engineering Company, Limited, which has carried out many big works.

It has been a common feeling of men like Napoleon to wish their sons, however incompetent, to succeed them, to make an electorial office hereditary. This is not the case with Diaz. To be the founder of an hereditary dynasty has never been his aim.

For the past twenty years, since he assumed the office of President for the second time, Porfirio Diaz and Cármelita, his wife, have lived quietly and happily in Cadena. In the summer time they have moved out to the Castle of Chapultepec for a few months, so Chapultepec still remains the President's official summer home. On that rock Montezuma built his palace, and all the dictators, rulers, and presidents of Mexico have lived in that historic spot. Maximilian has, perhaps, left the greatest mark behind, as all the open corridors round the roof garden are painted in Pompeian style according to his orders. They are crude and ugly, but the lovely palms, bougainvillea, honeysuckle, date-palms, banana-trees, violets, heliotrope scenting the air, scarlet and gold nasturtiums growing

eight or ten feet high, and passion flowers partly hide their crudeness. A tangled garden of creepers is that roof at Chapultepec.

There is a glorious view from Chapultepec, and in the soft lights of evening, tea on the balcony is delightful—real English tea and cakes dispensed by the châtelaine in gracious and charming style. Madame Diaz has a quiet, refined dignity of bearing which often reminds one of Queen Alexandra, her charming figure and pretty style of dress adding to the illusion. She is, of course, many years younger, taller, and darker in colouring, but the resemblance is strong.

Chapultepec is neither a palace nor a home. It is not large nor handsome enough for a palace, nor comfortable nor cosy enough for a home ; but it has a glory of its own : it commands one of the most gorgeous panoramas in the world. It stands on a high rock in the middle of a great plain. The public drive is below, between wonderful cypress trees, where the band plays and many entertainments are given ; but no one is allowed up the hill without an order, except the students of the military college, who share with the President the privilege of living at the top.

In the late afternoon—about sundown—the aristocracy of the city take their drive. Most people use closed carriages, and up and down, up and down that fine boulevard, to and from the Castle of Chapultepec, they roll in the dark—twilight there is none—and imagine they are enjoying themselves. The grand ladies are seldom seen during daylight, except at early mass ; they come out like bats in the dark, yet they need not be shy, for many of them are extremely good-looking, with lovely dark hair and eyes, and wonderful teeth.

One afternoon, about four o'clock on a winter's day, Madame Diaz and I drove out to tea. In deference to my love of fresh air she had ordered a victoria, and as we made our way to Chapultepec we were almost the only people not hidden deep in broughams on that lovely afternoon.

Mexico, as I have said elsewhere, is full of romance, and in the spring-fed pool at the bottom of the hill, nestling among those glorious trees, dwells the water sprite Malinche. This

Photo by Cox,]

Chapultepec Castle, General Diaz' summer home.

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Photo by RAVELL.]

Popocatepetl, extinct volcano, 17,782 feet above the sea.

[*Page* 301.

being spends her days at the foot of Chapultepec; she woos the passer-by with music, is gentle and sweet, a goddess of love and goodness, but the legend says that at nightfall she flies miles and miles away, her voice grows mournful, and sometimes she becomes very wicked.

'Tis a pretty legend, and one of, oh, so many!

Instead of driving up the hill nowadays, a lift has been installed for the use of the President—a lift which penetrates Montezuma's old rock and brings one out at its very summit in the Castle grounds.

On arriving at the crest of the hill, what a glorious view lay spread before us! Probably the finest panorama in the whole world. Below lies Mexico City, originally founded in 1428, by the Aztecs, under the name of Tenochtitlan, while beyond are the lakes, which, doubtless, millions, ay, billions of years ago filled the entire valley with water. Ten miles away, rising almost perpendicularly from the basin, begins a grand chain of mountains. There, on the right, almost tapering to a point, is the volcano Popocatepetl, some 17,782 feet in height, while next to him is the snow lady, Ixtaccihuatl, 16,062 feet high. They are more imposing than the Alps, because their snow-crowned summits tower singly into the heavens and the extent of valley below adds strength and grandeur to their rugged peaks. This vast expanse gives a feeling of immensity, nothing confined or shut in. It is sublime.

It chanced, when first I was there, to be a glorious sunset. The snow was coral pink, and the clouds chasing one another across the sky and over the mountains were pink, and blue, and grey in turn. Mexico is famous for her skyscapes, and certainly that night she surpassed herself. One moment the picture seemed all ablaze with red and yellow, and the next, as though a curtain fell suddenly from heaven, all was dark.

Yes, that view from Chapultepec was the grandest, the most imposing, and, in those soft evening lights, the most sublime, I have ever gazed upon in the course of many wanderings. Well may the Mexicans be proud of their land.

We saw the Palace—the famous Pompeian court arranged

by poor Maximilian, which General Diaz will not have altered, as he made it—the roof-garden with roses, geraniums, and gorgeous-leaved plants growing in the open air at Christmas time; but inside the building was disappointing, for the rooms were all furnished with modern French upholstery, instead of antique Spanish! Large verandahs, palms and banana plants gave an Eastern effect, and yet a chilliness filled the air on that winter evening.

Either Mexico City is growing colder or the blood of the people less warm. The old open houses, with their airy patios, no fireplaces, and huge rooms, are cold and dreary in the present-day winter, and thus it is that some of the modern houses have been built more suitably to the climate.

On the terrace we drank tea, handed round by servants in plain livery and white gloves. We had delicious cakes and strawberries—yes, strawberries at Christmas, in fact, strawberries all the year round are possible in some parts of Mexico. We were joined at tea by Madame Diaz' sisters and friends, and a very happy, jolly little party we were, stopping now and then to gaze at the glorious sunlit panorama.

Madame Diaz has two sisters: Luisa Romero Rubio married the late José de Teresa, who died recently when filling the post of Minister in Vienna; the other sister, Sophia, married Señor Elieza, a lawyer and member of Congress.

It was almost too beautiful a night to talk, and thoughts of the history of that great rock on which we sipped our modern five o'clock tea kept recurring to one's mind.

A great page in history is covered by the rock of Chapultepec. Here the Aztecs burned their sacrificial fires—here the victims were bound, their living hearts torn forth to assuage the anger of the gods. Here deeds of cruelty and horror were enacted through long centuries. Here feather-decked Aztecs made revelry and brought offerings of fruit and flowers to lay at the foot of Chapultepec. Quaint gods were set up in niches cut in the rock, incense was burned in vases and large spoons resembling frying-pans. The milder early people of Mexico, the Toltecs, had been overcome by the more cruel Aztecs—a people who

A terrace at the castle of Chapultepec.

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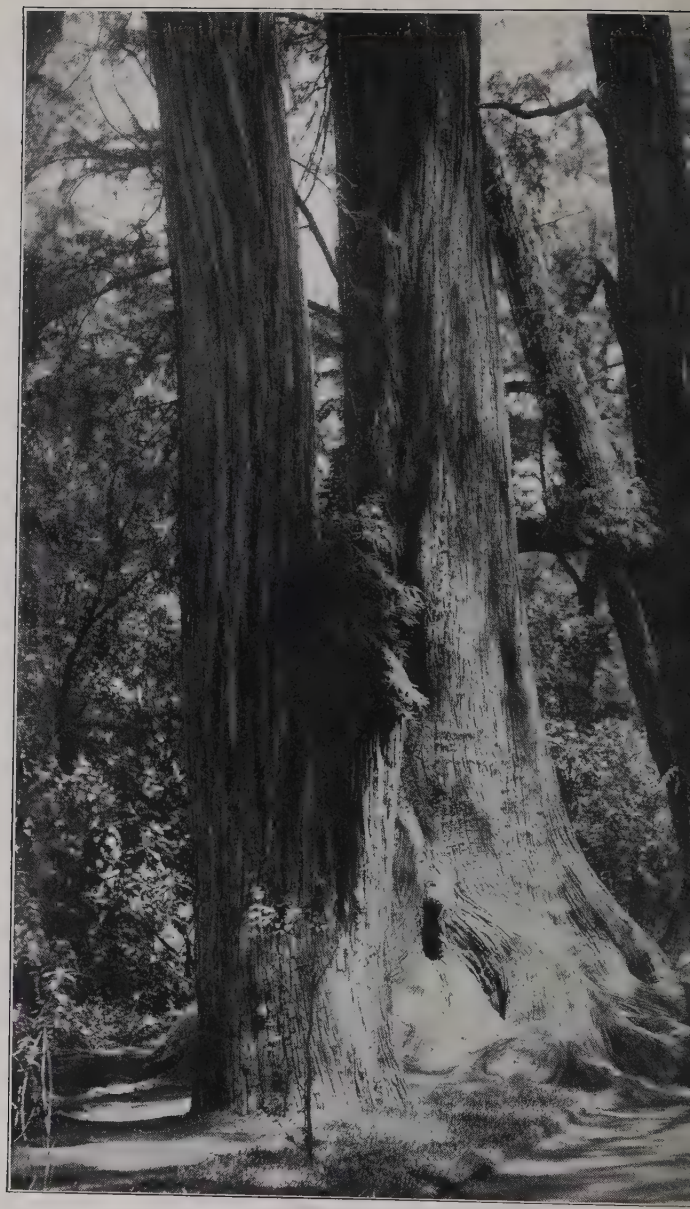

Photo by PERCY S. COX.]

General Diaz' f

e walk at Chapultepec.

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revelled in human sacrifice—and at religious ceremonies were cannibals.

How many millions of years—for time counts for nought in the construction of the world—is it since that old rock of the Grasshopper (Chapultepec) raised its head out of the marshy, lake-like valley below. Its emblem, a large red porphyry grasshopper over a foot long, is in the Mexico Museum.

We could picture the priests of yore, issuing forth on just such a night, followed by their acolytes and choristers, and in solemn procession descending those steps to the scent of wafted incense, made from copal, such as is used in the churches of Mexico to-day, and accompanied by the chant of human voices. We seemed to see them cross the hill-top, pausing finally before a sacrificial stone, similar to that which is now in the Mexican Museum ; we saw the human victim led forth, bound and fettered, and then——!

Such barbaric festivals lasted until the time when Cortéz, in 1519, marched into the valley of the Aztecs, and the great Hill of the Grasshopper, the stronghold of Montezuma, passed into the hands of a conquering power. These Aztec people are not dead, as many suppose. There are half a million or more in Mexico to-day, who still speak the Aztec language and closely resemble in physique and physiognomy the pictures carved thousands of years ago on such fortresses as Xochicalco.

The Aztecs were a race of great culture and refinement, and artistic in a high degree. Their altars, tombs, gods, gold work, pottery, bespeak rare gifts. Their decorations were not conventional. Usually they are found chiselled all over the stone work, representing human figures, and large eagles or serpents, and are entirely unlike those of the Zapotecs, whose work was mostly geometrical, and closely resembled Greek designs.

The meal was over ; the sun had set, darkness covered the land before we turned to leave. As we reached the entrance to the lift, the custodian advanced, hat in hand, bearing four lovely bouquets, apparently for the four ladies of the party—one of heliotrope, one of nasturtiums, one of roses, and one of

forget-me-nots, and handed them to the President's wife. The flowers were fresh picked from those blooming on the terrace. She waved him to let me, as her guest, have first choice. Very pretty and gracious of her, but then everything she does is on a par with this. Laying our sweet-scented bouquets on the seat of the carriage, we bowled away beneath those glorious cypress trees, and back to Mexico City.

These cypress are famous all the world over. Beneath their shade Montezuma walked and Cortéz rode, as the President of Mexico rides and walks to-day. Grey, tangled moss falls in showers from the branches, reminiscent of the more tropical vegetation of the South.

A Guard of Rurâles and the Castle of Chapultepec in the background.

Señor Guillerno de Landa y Escandon.

Captain Diaz (the President's son).

General Diaz.

A MORNING'S RIDE.

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Madame Diaz, the queen of Mexican society.

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CHAPTER XVI.

SOCIAL DOINGS.

BEFORE leaving the subject of Madame Diaz, it may be well to give some idea of Mexican society, whose acknowledged queen she is. Therefore this chapter will deal with habits and customs, street life and daily events, rather than with war, politics, mining, or agriculture.

The City of Mexico has been likened to Paris, and in many ways the comparison is good. It is not as bustling as New York, nor yet as conservative as London. The gayest society, the smartest frocks, the prettiest women are to be found; but the restaurants are indifferent, and the hotels worse. Advanced civilisation, great refinement, beauty and talent can be seen in the capital itself, yet barbarism exists outside.

There is great wealth in the city, palatial homes where the occupants do not even enjoy the luxury of a want.

Society is very exclusive. The families are wonderfully united, and spend most of their time together; that is to say, the women folk do, for the men, until last year, had a way of slipping off to the Jockey Club, where they played baccarat, which began at five o'clock every afternoon, and did not always stop at five next morning. The baccarat tables are now closed, and other forms of gambling do not prove quite so alluring.

The day begins with coffee, taken in the bedrooms—a custom that enables people to go about in négligé attire for the greater part of the forenoon, as in France. The ladies slip mantillas over their heads, and black cloaks about their bodies, and start off to early Mass, but on their return they disappear into dress-

ing-gowns and slippers and are seen no more till the mid-day meal, usually served about one o'clock, when soup, fish, entrées, meats, puddings, and numerous sweets always appear at table in the better houses. This banquet is the event of the day; visitors are invited, and sociability ensues. Formerly everyone indulged in a siesta after dinner; indeed, all houses of business are still closed from one to three, but nowadays the siesta itself is going out of fashion, except among servants and the poorer classes.

When the important business of lunching is over, each gentleman offers his arm to a lady, and conducts her back to the drawing-room. Cigarettes follow. Society dames in Mexico scarcely ever smoke; but among Indian women the habit is universal. Cigarettes in the north, and cigars in the more southern tobacco-growing districts, are constantly to be seen.

As regards house decoration, one seldom finds flowers about in this land of beautiful blossoms. Perhaps the Mexicans do not care to have them in their rooms because they die so quickly at that high altitude; but whatever be the cause, one just as often sees artificial flowers in the drawing-room as real ones. The prettiest bloom has not always the sweetest scent, just as the softest speech often hides a cruel heart.

After coffee, which is always strong, but generally good, for Mexico is producing excellent coffee nowadays, the visitors depart. It is the custom for the host and hostess to walk to the top of the staircase, where the châtelaine says "good-bye," and the gentleman offers his arm to his lady guest, takes her down to the patio, and puts her into her carriage. I had no carriage, and it was no uncommon thing for the host to send me home in his. The women have pretty manners and dress charmingly —everything they wear comes from Paris—and their politeness and amiability surprise a stranger.

The courtesy of Mexico is wonderful; for instance, at a dinner party a man will hand a glass of wine to a woman, and with a bow say:

"*Endulcemela*," meaning "Sweeten it for me." She raises the glass to her lips, and then passes it back for the gentleman to enjoy.

Again, when paying a first call on a friend, I was amazed at the following remark :

" *Ya tomó ud. posesion de su casa.*" (" You have now taken possession of *your* home.")

One admires a watch or a cabinet. " It is yours," is the prompt remark, which means nothing ; it is only a figure of speech like " I hope you are quite well."

In reply to the question, " Where do you live ? " a Mexican will say :

" *Su casa de usted no.* 10," etc., meaning, " *Your* house, the house at which you are welcome, is No. 10," etc.

When writing a letter, instead of putting the address they often write, " *C. de V.*" (Casa de V.), meaning " *Your* house," or " *my* house at your disposal."

The Mexican must learn to be more parsimonious in promises. He is so generous in thought that he gives away all he has, only to draw back in deed.

In spite of great wealth, there is none of that vulgar, ostentatious display of riches which betrays humble origin. Of course there are miserably poor folk in the city as everywhere else ; and doubtless there are miserably rich, for although money shuts the door on want, gold alone never brings happiness.

It is always said that high Mexican families are exclusive, and there is no doubt but that this is the case—even to those bearing good introductions—for they are so taken up with their own affairs that beyond a stately dinner they seldom extend hospitality. Individually, I found them charming, however, well-read, well-educated, pleasant-mannered ; in every way cultivated gentlefolk, extremely hospitable and courteous.

Speaking of that curious trait in the Spanish, want of hospitality of any kind to a foreigner, a man who was Ambassador in Madrid for nearly four years said to me :

" They dined at my house, came to balls and parties, asked for invitations for their cousins and aunts, but only *once* during all the time I spent in Madrid did I ever dine at a Spaniard's table. That was the only invitation I ever had with a date and hour affixed. ' Will you come and dine one night ? ' was continually

asked, and equally continually I replied : ' I should be delighted ' ; but nothing ever came of such invitations."

There are six thousand English-speaking people in the City of Mexico, and not a dozen of their families have the entrée to Mexican homes. This is conservatism indeed, and the Mexicans would do well to follow the excellent example of their President, and be a little more gracious to strangers with good introductions.

Mexican families are most amiable and united among themselves. The better classes own houses which are perfect palaces. In one of them dwells Señor So-and-So with his wife and children ; but madame's mother and sister joined the establishment on the death of madame's father, and in addition Señor So-and-So has a mother and brother who make their home with him. This is not the exception but the rule. They all seem to agree splendidly ; the family life appears to be of the happiest nature.

It struck me that little entertaining of a " friendly " kind was enjoyed. Big luncheons and dinners, or nothing, were the fashion. No one apparently ever " drops in." No attempt is made to keep open house.

When invitations are given, the entertainments are costly and well done ; but then the usual formality accrues. Mexicans so far have not realised that the poorest morsel offered with love and sympathy is far more welcome than the grandest feast without them ; they only entertain on a grand scale.

Mexicans are very Latin by temperament. They become wildly enthusiastic over some person or thing which excites their interest for the time ; but they soon weary of the new hobby, and the passion dies out almost as quickly as it was kindled. They are excitable in conversation, gesticulate freely to emphasise their words, and one feels that the warm blood of a southern race is tingling in their veins.

Many of these beautiful Mexican homes contain rare old Spanish furniture, bric-à-brac, pictures, and things that have been in the family for generations. Most of them, alas ! are stowed away in the nurseries or servants' quarters. All the houses are modern French in appearance ; but hidden away are

countless treasures, the value of which is only just beginning to dawn on the present generation.

The winter is the season for entertaining; then balls and parties are given, and everyone is prepared to enjoy himself. The invitations are generally short because, as everyone is more or less related to everyone else, it is pretty well known when So-and-So's birthday will take place, or when the celebration of some couple's silver wedding will occur.

As President of the Republic, General Diaz never dines out except at purely official functions, but as Porfirio Diaz he often takes a meal with friends, and enjoys himself thoroughly. Although royal in bearing at times, he is not surrounded by any court etiquette; friends do not have to wait for him to speak first, or stand in his presence. I have seen him extraordinarily dignified and majestic, Diaz the unapproachable, and I have seen him in a blue serge suit playing with baby children—Diaz, the grandpapa. He is two men in one, a great ruler and autocrat and a kindly, gentle, homely man. He excels in both, and it is hard to believe the other possible when in the presence of either. The greatest personality in the history of our modern world, and the most romantic, forsooth.

Even when elected President for the second time, General Diaz avoided all show. He did not wish the people to think he was tending to self-aggrandisement, or in any way wished to copy royalty. Therefore, although he started a carriage and pair, for many years he did not let his coachman wear livery. That coachman was an Englishman, but on the box he appeared in a Mexican costume, and a big black felt sombrero hat. It was only about 1887 that the President put his servants into livery, and had a second man on the box. To-day they wear small cockades of the Republican colours in their hats, otherwise the whole turn-out is absolutely quiet and excellent in style.

Although General Diaz is not a rich man and lives a quiet, unostentatious life, he does an immense amount of public work.

To show what the General can and does accomplish in twenty-four hours, I must give an example of a day I passed with him.

I, who am barely half his age, was dead tired at the end of it; he as fresh as possible.

Saturday, the 19th November, 1904, began a series of festivals in honour of his re-election to the Presidency for the seventh time.

The first of the series was given by his daughter Amada, who is the wife of Ignacio de la Torre.

The following invitations were sent out:

"Ignacio de la Torre y Mier
y Señora,
tienen el gusto de invitar á Vd.
á tomar una taza de Thé,
en esta su casa,
el próximo Sábado 19 *del corriente,*
á las 9 *p.m.*
México, Noviembre de 1904."

The only strange thing about the invitation, with its fine crest, good paper and printing, was the fact that the guests were invited to "take a cup of tea," although the hour mentioned was nine o'clock.

When I arrived upon the scene, driven there by Captain Diaz, we found quite a line of carriages before us. The handsome road in which the de la Torres have their palace is that leading to Chapultepec, up and down which society drives every afternoon at dusk. The de la Torres live in one of the finest houses of Mexico, far, far finer than the President's. When we arrived it was to find the usual entrance through which carriages drive to the patio (courtyard) carpeted in red, and ornamented with palms. The entire patio had been covered in and converted into a theatre.

Just inside the President and his daughter, Señora de la Torre, who resembles him strangely in appearance, were receiving the guests. Madame Diaz, with her usual tact, feeling that the party was given for her husband, and that her daughter-in-law was the rightful hostess, had passed on to her seat in the front, leaving the President and Madame de la Torre to receive alone.

They spoke a few kindly words to all the guests, who were then ushered to their seats opposite the temporary theatre.

It was a splendid sight, the good looks of the women, the magnificence of the jewels, the Paris gowns, the diplomats in their orders, all tended to make it appear like a Court function.

The stage itself was quite large and most professional, with moss-green plush, pale pink and gold embroidery, and electric lights cleverly arranged as flaming torches.

A military band played during the arrival of the guests, who all assembled before 9.30, when the following programme began :

1°. SINFONIA.

2°.

Diálogo.	Monólogo.
Escribidma una carta Señor Cura	Le solo de flûte.
Señorita Paz García Dn. Luis Torres Riva	Viconde de Latour

3°. EL SUEÑO DEL ARTISTA.
(cuadro vivo.)

(Señora) Da. Leonor Torres de Sanz
(Srta.) Da. Maria Rincón Gallardo
(Srta.) Da. Mercedes Berriozábal
(Srta.) Da. Luz Cortina
(Srtas.) Da. Luisa y Da. Teresa de Iturbide
(Srta.) Da. Maria Rivas Fontecha
(Srta.) Da. Concepción de Suinága
(Srta.) Da. Paz García
Dn. Luis Subervielle

4°. La Comedia en un acte y en verso original de Don Tomás Rodriguez Rubí, titulada :

"DE POTENCIA Á POTENCIA."

CARLOTA.	Da. Leonor Torres de Sanz
DON VALENTIN.	Dn. Luis Torres Rivas
DON LEON.	Dn. Nicolás Dominguez Cottilla
DN. GABINO.	Dn. Francisco de Suinága
DN. ENRIQUE.	Dn. Alfonso Rincón Gallardo

5°. MINUE (EPOCA LUIS XVI.).
Música del Maestro Rafael Gascón.
Parejas :

(Srta) de Rincón Gallardo	Teniente : Sommerhoff
(Srta) de Suinága	Sr. Búlnes
(Srta) Luz Garcia... ...	Sr. Berriozábal
(Srta) Teresa de Iturbide...	Sr. Guinága
(Srta) Luisa de Iturbide ...	Sr. D. Enrique F. dez Castelló
(Srta) de Berriozábal ...	Sr. Barros
(Srta) Ma. Rivas Fontecha	Sr. D. Alfredo F. dez Castelló
(Srta) Da. Luz Cortina ...	Sr. D. Alfonso RincónGallardo

Dirigido por la Profesora Amalia Leprí.

They were all amateurs, and I don't remember ever seeing better, or any private performance done in a more professional style.

General Diaz, with General Clayton, the senior Ambassador (U.S.A.), General Mena (Secretary of War), and various ministers and diplomats, sat in front and enjoyed the evening thoroughly.

The performance lasted about two hours, and at 12.30 the

"tea" announced on the invitation, which really meant a buffet-supper, was ready upstairs. I met many old friends; Governors of States, with whom I had ridden through the mountains three and a half years previously; ministers who had been with the party when I crossed the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in a private train; and endless old Mexican friends whom I had not seen before during that second visit to Mexico, so I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

The performance over, every man gave a woman his arm, and upstairs we all filed to supper. While that was going on all the seats in the patio were cleared, and the younger people danced till four or five o'clock in the morning.

It was a magnificent affair from first to last. There were about two hundred people present, composing the highest society of Mexico and the representatives of foreign countries; but not a single foreigner from any country unless as its representative.

I unfortunately had a very bad cold with loss of voice, rather a serious business unless checked at such an altitude, where pneumonia is so prevalent, so I left early. Before going the President, who had been a most energetic host all the evening and had laughed and applauded with real enjoyment, asked if I would care to go to a school inspection and prize-giving the next morning (or rather that morning, for it was then past one a.m.) at nine o'clock.

"Of course I should."

"Very well," he said, "my son will drive you home now and fetch you at twenty minutes to nine to-morrow morning to go to the Art Schools. If you can be ready?"

Certainly I could be, and was.

It was 3.30 a.m. before the President left for home—but would that deter his being up early? No, not a bit of it—before seven he was telephoning Captain Diaz to be sure and call for me at 8.40 as arranged, and even before that hour he had done some official work.

"My father never forgets anything," said Captain Diaz when he arrived in his equerry's uniform. "So here I am."

We drove off in his carriage to the Academy, where the General with another equerry, Major Escandon, had just arrived.

A guard of soldiers lined the street and patio and played a military march on the arrival of the President who, as he passed, acknowledged their salutations. Four equerries, some ministers, and the heads of the Academy formed the little procession.

The Mexican art students undoubtedly show talent. Many of their studies were excellent ; but then they have a clever man at the head—Señor Antonio Fabres.

Now for a specimen of the thoroughness of the President of Mexico. Once a year he inspects everything everywhere, apparently, and judging by the proceedings that day, nothing escapes his eye.

For one hour and a half we walked round those class-rooms. Diaz made remarks on everything, even to noticing that the porter had a better room to sit in than the lady students to dress in, a matter which he at once suggested should be changed. He talked with the professors, discussed alterations with ministers, chatted pleasantly to students, but for one hour and a half he never sat down.

This man was seventy-four ; he had been at a ball till the small hours, had risen before seven, attended to his letters and telephoned, and had walked round those buildings, formerly an old convent, from nine to 10.30.

Amid a blast of trumpets and waving hats he then drove off to the Tivoli garden, about a couple of miles away, to attend the festival of the scholars of the Normal Schools. Here more soldiers, more National Anthems, more ministers, and as the General passed the Mexican flag I noticed he always raised his own hat ; during the anthem everyone else kept theirs off.

The Himno Nacional, which somewhat resembles the *Marseillaise*, was composed by Señor Nuno in 1850. Fifty-five years later he returned to Mexico at the age of ninety, to write an heroic march, named *Porfirio Diaz*, in honour of the President's seventh return to power. This march was played for the first time on December 1st, 1904, when Diaz took the oath.

It was a remarkable thing that the composer of the National Anthem fifty-five years before should, at ninety years of age, be able to compose another march in honour of such a patriotic occasion.

Two hours more were occupied in walking from daïs to daïs at the Tivoli to see the different sets of scholars, boys and girls from four to eighteen, at drill, reciting, marching, doing physical exercises, dancing, etc. There were about three thousand pupils present, and probably twenty thousand people.

As we went from one pavilion to another the enthusiasm of the crowd became intense, and it was quite difficult to keep order; they rushed in upon us, nearly crushing the poor President, who smiled and nodded, and looked as if he liked it. Again I realised how difficult it must have been to bring Spanish and Indian blood to any sort of subjection, for they easily get excited and unruly.

The crux of the entertainment was a little play given by the scholars, denoting the arrival of Cortéz, and his meeting with Montezuma and María. This luckily was indoors, for the heat in some of the tents had been rather overpowering on that hot November Sunday morning. By one o'clock the President looked at his watch, and said he was sorry he must leave, as he was due at the bull fight at three.

Thus we passed out under floral wreaths, hanging moss, decorations and flags; while soldiers, police, dressed-up children, and a vast crowd of people bowed and cheered.

Education is one of the great factors in Mexico to-day, and Diaz has done almost more in that direction than in any other; education with him is a perfect craze. The public schools in every State of Mexico are looked after by its Central Government, and there are normal schools well supported by Government funds where teachers are trained. As for the art schools, industrial schools and technical schools of all kinds, they are too numerous to mention. There are night schools in every town of importance in Mexico. General Diaz says: "The State must teach scholarship, industry, and patriotism; religious teaching must be done at home."

Every sort of thing is taught in the schools—stenography, typewriting, tailoring, dressmaking, telegraphy, cooking—in fact, there is no knowledge the Mexican-Indian cannot acquire. And, curious to relate, in every public school above the primary grade, English is a compulsory subject. Because, says the President :

" English is the language of commerce, and therefore the language of the world."

Diaz never attends bull fights. In fact, he would rather they were discontinued, but they are " too national a sport for drastic laws," he says. This, however, was a particular occasion, for it was the last public appearance of a famous old matador, Mazzantini, who had personally begged the President to honour him by appearing.

Accordingly, after a lapse of many years, Porfirio Diaz again entered the bull ring.

At three o'clock, when he arrived, twelve thousand spectators rose to cheer him ; they stood upon their seats, roared themselves hoarse, waved hats and handkerchiefs, while the band played the National Anthem.

The gorgeous though bloody pageant began.

Let us glance back for one moment. The President had had a family dinner on Saturday evening ; at nine o'clock he was at a ball which he did not leave until half-past three. Five hours later he was at the San Carlos School giving prizes, and at the Normal Schools doing much the same sort of thing, the two occupying four hours. After a hurried luncheon he reached the bull ring by three o'clock, and did not leave until five, when he went home to attend to business until dinner time, and then enjoyed a quiet game of billiards before going to bed.

Not a bad twenty-four hours' work and play for a man who is nearing the eighties, a man who has lived many lives and worked hard—been poor and struggling, energetic and brave, and has now become a diplomat and cultured gentleman, able to take the head of affairs and act in the manner of an Emperor.

Yes, with the exception of five hours' sleep that man was

receiving friends, giving prizes, inspecting schools, and never for one moment away from the crowd. It is only those who have seen such a thing and lived through its fatigue that can realise the strain. A perpetual smile becomes an inward pain, constant tension and amiability become almost an ache, but the herculean old warrior did it all, and pleased everyone even if he bored himself. He loves his people and will do anything to give them pleasure.

Society in Mexico is very charming, and much of its charm it owes to the wife of the President, who, also, is untiring in her public and private duties. Then it has other attractions, the weather can be relied on, and the town itself is beautiful.

It may seem a bold thing to say that Mexico City to-day is one of the finest combinations of ancient and modern architecture in the world; for its size it certainly is. It has the most beautiful location of any town I know and, now it has been cleaned and tidied up, must surely stand in the forefront. Old Madrid has disappeared, and an ugly, uninteresting city in the midst of a rocky plain, containing gems of armour and art, has taken its place; but Old Mexico, in the hollow of vast chains of mountains and volcanoes, remains.

It is a town of clean streets, well-paved and well-lighted roads, good police force, with an excellent tram service, which, like so many things in Mexico, is worked by English capital and American managers.

Much of this improvement is due to Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandon, who, as Mayor of the Federal District, is unceasing in his endeavours to clean and improve the town. When he came to England as special envoy for the Coronation of King Edward VII., he visited all sorts of public institutions in London, Paris, Berlin, and Rome, took notes of all kinds, and on his return to Mexico introduced many improvements, founded on the results of his investigations.

There are large, handsome shops and clubs, a fine park with flower-bordered shady walks; good market-places—in fact, Mexico City is a revelation. There is nothing so picturesque on the vast continent of America.

Photo by GARNAT.]

Pottery for sale.

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Photo by Cox.]

A fruit vendor. Showing the aqueduct near Chapultepec, partly destroyed by Cortes, 1519.

[*Page* 317.

What a wonderful stream of humanity passes the President's house every day—what wealth—what poverty!

Constantly, in Mexico, one is reminded of the East. The same enormous straw hats are worn as in Tangier. The Indian women, with their babies on their backs, recall their Arab sisters; both carry heavy weights upon their heads, and are either barefooted or sandalled. They have the same olive skin and dark hair, but the Arab is a finer specimen of mankind than the average Indian. In both countries one sees public letter-writers at the street corners; but in Mexico they sit, instead of squatting cross-legged as does a Moor; there are the same medicine men, the same deformed beggars.

One need not go outside the markets of Mexico City to see the real native, in all his glory, surrounded by gorgeous flowers, tropical fruit, and brilliant vegetables. All have arrived by boat from the floating gardens a few hours previously, and here men, women, babies and dogs squat together, howl, shriek and bargain in truly Oriental fashion.

No church processions are now allowed; not only are convents and monasteries closed, but the priests are not permitted to appear in the streets in clerical garb. It is therefore strange to see coats, cloaks, and top-hats put on to hide the signs of their calling.

The street cries of Mexico are varied and numerous. All day, from 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. they may be heard.

"*Gorditas del Horno*"—"Corncakes hot from the oven"—is a favourite cry.

"*Toman nuezes*"—"Will you have nuts?"—which said nuts are sold by the sack-load, from the street gutter.

"*Carbosin*"—"Charcoal, sir?" A few lumps, enough to fill one hand, are sold at a time, and serve to cook the family food for a whole day. They are placed in a soup-plate and coaxed into flame by the Indian squaw with her reed-plaited fan.

There is immense wealth in the city of Mexico. The younger sons of the oldest Spanish families came over with Cortéz in 1519, and after the Conquest remained in the old-new country. They bought, or took possession of, little bits of land, and now those

acres of arid waste represent mines of untold wealth, and to-day the descendants of those old nobles are living in beautiful palaces in Mexico City.

Then there is the middle class, largely composed of foreigners engaged in business. Besides Anglo-Americans there are French, Germans, a sprinkling of Russians, Italians, Chinese, Japanese, and other nationalities.

The rich are not so interesting, for the rich are the same in every land. They dress from London or Paris, eat food cooked by French chefs, have English nurses and governesses for their children, are, indeed, a cosmopolitan lot, no matter in what country they are found. Top-hats and frock coats belong to the wealthy even in Mexico, and yet the streets are frequently watered by an Indian with a water-can (which merely lays the surface dust for a few moments), so great are the contrasts in that interesting land.

See that detachment of soldiers riding past the window as I write—they are fine looking men, dark of skin—in their blue uniforms with red trimmings. Behind them come a dozen cowboys fresh from a country ranch. Some of them wear the brown leather native dress known as charro, with white embroidery and dozens of silver buttons up the leg. Their trousers are so tight one wonders if they have to be poured into them, or how their legs ever arrive inside. Each man has a pistol in his belt and a dozen yards of rope made from the fibre of the ixtle hanging to his saddle. The rope is used to lassoo cattle on the prairie. Everyone of that group wears a large sombrero hat, with generally a scarlet tie.

Round the corner from the rich man's house is a street full of queer signs. A remnant of old picture-writing still remains in Mexico, as in Holland. Before they knew how to write the name of the owner of a shop in any country they painted a sign by which the place could be recognised. Even to-day these extraordinary pictures are to be seen in all the lower parts of the town. The walls are like grotesque picture books, and even in the better quarters titles are given to the shops instead of the owners' names, as we in England still continue to do with public houses. Some of them are funny and extremely inappropriate.

The drink shops, perhaps, choose the strangest, a few of which are given haphazard.

In Remembrance of the Future.....	Pulque shop, where the native drink taken from the aloe may be bought. A deadly intoxicant, as the milk is fermented.
The Avenger.....	Pulque shop
The Last Days of Pompeii	,, ,,
Star of Bethlehem.....	,, ,,
The Peace of Cuba	,, ,,
The Sorrow	,, ,,
The Arts.....	,, ,,
The Mad King	,, ,,
The Little Hill	,, ,,
Diana's Saloon	,, ,,
Temple of Love.....	,, ,,
The White Rose	,, ,,
Toad in the Hole	Butcher (hangs out a red flag to denote he has freshly-killed meat).
Daughter of Snow	Fruit and vegetables.
The Three Graces.....	,, ,, ,,
Golden Star	Grocery.
Adam and Eve	,,
The Senator	Barber's Shop.
The Blue Horse	,, ,,
The Fountain of Gold	,, ,,
The Wolf in a Cage	,, ,,
Sacred Heart of Jesus	Baker.
The Pearl of St. Catherine	Pawnbroker.
The Ideal of Art	,,
The Rose of the Sea	,,
Shower of Gold	,,

Ten years ago, as late as 1895, it was unsafe to be out after dark anywhere beyond Mexico City. People riding in the interior were armed to the teeth and guarded by servants, and the towns were only to be trusted by the light of day. Gradually all this is changing. Twenty miles from the city men still carry arms, but more from precaution than necessity, more from habit than requirement.

Murders in the mining camps are not unknown, but are they

unknown anywhere where men meet ? Take it all round, Mexico is as safe as the United States of America, although not as safe as Old England or Scandinavia.

What are those men running for down the middle of the street ? They are the cargadors ; men whose trade it is to become beasts of burden and carry everything from a grand piano to a rat-trap, a wardrobe to a toast-rack. The cargador is generally a small man with broad shoulders and thick arms and legs. He does not look strong, but his capacity for handling weight is extraordinary. A Mexican will carry five hundred pounds on his shoulders. Whole households are moved by these men, who for big things generally work in couples and carry weights on a sort of stretcher.

Even the Aztecs had a wonderful system of communication, carried out by men instead of horses. The day following the landing of Cortéz at Vera Cruz his arrival was known at the Mexican capital, three hundred miles away by road. The news was brought by runners of the native cargador service.

These runners were accustomed from their youth to great pace and endurance. A boy of the lower class who showed evidence of speed was at once drafted into the Emperor Montezuma's service and put into training as a professional runner. They were used in hundreds of ways. They kept the army in constant communication with the capital, no matter how far it might be away from home, or how difficult the country.

It is said that fish caught in the cool of the evening at Vera Cruz was served to Montezuma for breakfast on the following morning. This was done by having a number of the fastest runners in the Emperor's service stationed about a mile apart all the way along the royal road from Vera Cruz to Mexico City. The first man ran at his utmost speed and delivered his burden to the second, who in like manner passed it on to the third. In this way the messengers made almost as good time on foot as the trains do to-day. After the conquest, the Spaniards often used Indian runners for postal service between Vera Cruz and Mexico City. This service was generally accomplished in a day by the Indians, while the stage-coaches took from three

days to a week. The runners were also used as spies or, in more polite language, as scouts.

It is a curious thing that the native carrier of Mexico to-day becomes so accustomed to having a weight upon his back that on his return journey through the mountains, if he has nothing to carry, he fills his sack with stones, which he maintains gives him a better balance. He considers that the weight helps his position going up hill and eases him coming down. The runners are, of course, always barefooted, although they often carry their sandals on the top of their load, and slip them on when entering the towns.

Truly, 'tis a strange and wonderful procession that passes before the windows of the President of Mexico every day. The smartest of carriages, the finest of horses, the richest of clothes and jewels. Shoulder to shoulder with the street-criers, the pedlars and the beggars, rags and tatters and native squalor give picturesque quaintness to the scene. Nowhere do modernity and barbarity shoulder one another more closely than in that historical and beautiful city.

From the ethnological, anthropological, poetic, and romantic points of view, Mexico is the most enthralling spot on the American continent.

Endless tribes speaking many languages. Endless forms of superstition and religion; an artistic, thoughtful people, carvers and modellers in clay, a rude people living in caves, a smart society living in palaces—all such heterogeneous humanity goes to make up the population of the Mexico over which General Diaz reigns.

No soldiers guard the house of the President—there is no pomp or show; he feels so safe among the people that he goes unarmed and unattended. How many monarchs can say the same? One policeman sits by the door in the daytime, and an old guard is there at night.

Education, electric light, railways, splendid harbours, telegraphy and endless modern inventions are hustling old Mexico aside. The uneducated Indian who drinks himself dead drunk on pulque or mescal is rapidly disappearing. People are giving

up their belief in charms and weird cures for illness, and are entering the hospitals. They now enjoy better health amid their more sanitary surroundings, and are being taught the outlines of hygiene at school.

Speaking of this belief in the ancient medicine man, I myself saw some weird sights in the market in Mexico City. His stores are truly wonderful. Every conceivable herb and root is on sale, and each has its specific use. Rows of skinned moles and bats were hanging up, and I ventured to ask what they were for.

"To purify the blood," was the astonishing reply; "they cost one halfpenny (two cents) each, and are stewed and eaten."

"And what is that long, brown, bean-like-looking thing used for?"

"Headache. You take out the seeds, soak them in wine, and lay them on the aching part."

Among the many and marvellous cures for disease is one for neuralgia; this consists of putting something on the nerve just above where the jawbone joins the skull. One constantly sees people walking about with a patch of orange or lemon peel the size of a shilling on the affected temple. Nicotine from a cigar, or any aromatic leaf, is sometimes put on a bit of paper and used as a plaster, and a piece of snake-skin is also much prized for headache.

An alligator's tooth is dropped into boiling water, well stirred round, and the mixture drunk to cure heart disease or the bite of a rattlesnake. Oak galls are ground up fine and put on sore places; ants' nests are not used for baths, as in Finland, but are boiled and drunk to prevent hiccough and sickness. In fact, the list of queer remedies is endless, and a medicine man or woman sells them in every market-place.

It is a daily occurrence for a man or woman to go to a drug store and ask for a "love potion," just as was done in the days of Juliet; they drink the draught, and pay their centavos, happy in the belief that their sweetheart will return their affection.

There is a beautiful many-coloured bird in Mexico called Chupa-mirto, the first word meaning suction, the second a

flower. One day on a country road we saw a man fondling a little dead bird, but when he found we were watching him, he opened his cotton shirt and placed it inside, next his heart.

"Ah, that is a common superstition," said a friend. "The Indians think so long as they carry a Chupa-mirto next their skin, the man or woman they love cannot play them false. If they are enamoured with someone who does not care for them, they believe they will win the love by keeping the bird next their heart."

It is a pretty bird and a pretty superstition.

All Indians are afraid of the evil eye; but they do not paint a hand upon their houses, as do the people of Morocco, to protect them against misfortunes. They also fear the cry of the owl. A popular saying is that "the owl is the Indian's enemy," and when he cries a Mexican dies.

The deer is no longer respected, he is killed for his skin; but in the time of the Spanish invasion the deer was as sacred an animal in Mexico as the bull is in India to-day, and no one ever shot one of the pretty creatures. That superstition has died out.

Of course there are witches, as already noticed; and one very common practice is to get them to make a love effigy. For example, if a girl is in love, and the object of her affection jilts her and marries another girl, the love-sick maid goes off to the nearest witch. Together they make an effigy in rags—not clay or wax, but rags when it is a love case—and having painted his face and dressed him up as near to life as they can (although the one I saw resembled nothing in heaven or earth), they put pins into his vital parts, his heart, his lungs, his stomach or his head, singing a weird incantation the while. If the Fates are kind the unfaithful lover soon afterwards sickens at one of these points, pines away and dies.

The present-day religion of Mexico is teeming with interest. The canvas is of old barbaric thought, swayed by superstition, riddled by fear, tempered by cruelty, set in a frame of Roman Catholicism. 'Tis a land well worthy of a visit.

Living is somewhat costly in Mexico City, and the hotels

make that an excuse to charge at greater ratio still. The prices for rooms are simply enormous, and the accommodation deplorably bad. A bedroom and bathroom at 15 dollars a day (30s. English or $\$7\frac{1}{2}$ American) ought to have some pretensions to comfort, yet the bath water was invariably cold, and the attendance so bad that early breakfast came up minus a plate, butter, bread, and on one occasion minus the coffee itself.

Mexico is overrun with Americans; in the year 1900 a party of these tourists arrived. They were received by General Diaz at Chapultepec, and shown over the castle and the Military College adjoining. General Diaz accompanied them, and after visiting the various departments the party came to the gymnasium where some of the cadets were going through their exercises. The President, who was chatting familiarly with the tourists, saw a long climbing rope hanging near him and surprised those present by exclaiming:

"I wonder if I could climb it now."

He took off his coat and, hand over hand, climbed the rope. After he had come down again he turned to the Americans and said:

"You can say that you have seen a man of seventy climb up a rope."

How many men of his age could do that? particularly men of southern race, and in a warm climate.

He has always believed amusement to be essential to a healthy existence, just as he believes now that exercise is conducive to happiness.

Common-sense is one of the most uncommon commodities, but common-sense has steered him through many a turbulent sea.

Tact is usually as absent as it is necessary, but this does not apply to Diaz, who possesses both strongly engrained in his character.

Tact has been his staunchest ally. Through tact he has managed to keep friendly with all classes, and during all reforms, when evil-doers have had to be punished for the public good, the public has realised that it was for their benefit, and not for personal reasons, that he has made others suffer. He has

kept the love of the poor at all times, and has acquired the love and esteem of the educated and rich, among whom, at one time, were many of his bitterest enemies. The sons of the men who were most against him are now his staunchest friends and followers.

Diaz is not an orator. He has a good, rich, resonant voice, holds the attention of his audience, keeps to his points and gives his words force. In fact, at moments he almost rises to the dramatic; but this is rare. His language is plain and simple, his meaning always clear, and although he has a great spirit of fun, he has never been known to make a funny speech. He is wise enough never to make a speech unless he really has something to say. So many orations are delivered merely for the self-glorification of the speaker, and are hated by the listeners. People who read books for pleasure listen to speeches merely to criticise. Diaz speaks so seldom, and so to the point, that he disarms criticism. He keenly appreciates wit in others, but he is neither witty nor funny himself. Spanish lends itself to charming phrasing, and General Diaz has acquired the art of speaking Spanish well.

"Deeds not creeds," is ever his ideal. Like a true scholar, he prefers to learn and not to preach.

Humanity, one might broadly say, was his Bible, and to understand humanity is a work of real intelligence. The life of a community is but the life of the individual reduplicated.

At eight o'clock on any of the many beautiful Sunday mornings that Mexico revels in, a group of men, composed of Mexicans and a few foreigners, may be seen outside the National Railway Station in Mexico City, standing round a central figure, a fine military-looking man with a grey moustache, and dressed in ordinary English shooting-costume. He converses easily with his friends, and appears a thoroughly genial, kindly gentleman. This man is no less a personage than General Porfirio Diaz, starting for a day's *ganga* (plover) shooting.

The General turns and enters the station, followed by his friends. Inside a special train is found waiting to convey the party to the Hacienda of Jalpa, the property of Don Guillermo

de Landa y Escandon, situated about twenty-five miles from the city. The line of the railway runs for some miles through the hacienda itself, so that even after the party has left the saloons, about 9 a.m., it is possible to keep the train moving up and down the track at stated intervals, thus remaining more or less in communication with the shooting-party.

All being in readiness, General Diaz forms the party into a line, with himself in the middle, the two most important guests being on his right and left. They then commence to walk up the birds—each man being about six yards from his neighbour—over fields where the maize has lately been harvested, through maguez plantations, or over prairie lands. They do not shoot "over dogs" as is often the practice in England, but merely use these animals for retrieving purposes.

The "quarry" (plover) which have arrived from the fields of Florida are generally fat; indeed, some are so fat that, on being shot and falling from a height, they have actually been known to burst open with their own weight.

No one is keener on the sport than the President, none of the young men seem to have half his enthusiasm. Shooting without intermission continues till one o'clock when some central point is reached, where a marquee has been erected and luncheon is ready. One hour is allowed; the General likes the hour's rest, and to enjoy quietly such appetising, well-seasoned dishes as the Mexican chefs know how to prepare, perhaps including the national *mole-de-guajolote* or *asado-de-pastor*—the first being boiled turkey with a delicious thick brown hot sauce, and the second, various choice pieces of mutton roasted on sticks around a bonfire.

General Diaz is never seen to better advantage than on such an occasion; he converses with everyone, joining in the universal merriment over passing jokes, and generally he adds interesting and amusing reminiscences of his own. These happy shooting parties are his holidays. Affairs of State are thrust aside, and the man who is at the helm puts off his responsibility and enjoys himself like a keen schoolboy.

Luncheon over, the party again take the field, walking and

shooting till about five o'clock, when a line is made for the train, usually with a good bag. Mexico City is reached about six, and here, with a cheery and hearty "*Adios, amigos*" (Good-bye, friends), the President takes leave of his guests.

It was at one time General Diaz' habit to shoot with his left hand glove on but unbuttoned, carrying in the palm of the glove an extra cartridge. It is related by Don Alberto Terrerros, that on one occasion the General, having killed with his right and left, reloaded his right barrel with the cartridge from his glove so quickly he brought down his third bird from the same covey.

He is a good shot, and his mantle in this respect seems to have descended upon his son, who is not only excellent with a gun, but also a remarkable rifle shot, and, with a small Ballard rifle, can hit dollar after dollar when thrown into the air.

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW MEXICO'S DEBTS WERE PAID.

Diaz was after an interregnum of four years re-elected to power in 1884.

On the night of his re-election one of his most intimate associates went to the Palace to congratulate him.

"Spare your congratulations, good friend," he replied, "were it not that my love for Mexico kept me buoyant I should sink beneath the weight of responsibility.

"The coffers are empty; they are worse than empty—they are heavily weighted with debt, and Heaven knows how matters will end. But"—he lighted a cigar, and paced the room excitedly—"I am going to try. Don't congratulate me to-night. Come back in four years' time, and then let me know if my work is worthy of your congratulations."

Time rolled by, and that friend has filled important positions as Minister Plenipotentiary of Mexico in Europe. The same friendship exists between the two as existed on the field of battle in the days of Maximilian, when they fought side by side.

"And," continued the Minister, "Diaz not only tried, but he succeeded—succeeded far beyond his own expectations and to the amazement of all of us, more especially those who really knew the enormous odds against which he worked."

The problem of the government of Mexico had, indeed, during González' interregnum proved once more almost insurmountable. As I have shown, it had defeated every man who had attempted to solve it in the course of half a century. Every method of rule had been tried—Republicanism, autocracy, tyranny, imperialism—and the most that could be said of any

one of them was that it was a little less unsuccessful than the others. Diaz was showing Mexico the path upon which her progress towards peace and settled government lay when the automatic close of his term in the Presidency compelled him to hand over the continuation of his work to another.

Unhappily his successor proved unequal to the task. In the interval of four short years after Diaz relinquished power Mexico was thrown back to her former state, and growing embarrassments promised an early return of civil war.

General Manuel González had shown himself a brave soldier, and was a friend of the man whom he succeeded. This in itself was most unusual in Mexico, for rarely indeed in the long history of the Republic had office been peacefully relinquished by a President to his legally elected successor. The absence of any attempt at continuous policy by successive governments had been one of the chief factors in keeping the country perpetually disturbed. González came to his new task with sympathy towards all that had been done by Diaz, who, indeed, remained for a brief time a member of his Cabinet, and whose influence, whether he occupied the first position or was content to fill a subordinate part, was all the time exerted to secure the material welfare of Mexico.

González proved to have none of the gifts which make a good administrator. A reactionary spirit in his Cabinet gained the upper hand, and the finances of the country fell again into hopeless confusion.

An attempt to introduce small nickel coins in the place of silver and copper, involving considerable loss to people of the poorer classes who mostly used them, shook their faith in the currency. The people refused to accept the new coins, and the "Nickel Riots" broke out in 1883, by which González' administration is chiefly remembered.

Yet more disastrous as a disturbing factor were the proposals advanced for liquidating the nation's debt to England. The bulk of this debt, a sum of $30,000,000, had been contracted in the early days of the Republic. Interest had remained unpaid, and, added to the principal, brought the sum up to

$50,000,000 as long ago as 1850. With a view to collecting some of this money England consented to become a party to the intervention of the three Powers in 1863, which had its sequel in Maximilian's Empire.

Mexico had not been treated well. She had been a borrower without security, with shattered credit, and had been compelled to submit to somewhat usurious terms. Of the original debt of $30,000,000 she was under obligation to pay, it is stated that only $14,407,500 was the sum actually received.

By a convention signed in London on September 18, 1884, it was agreed by the Mexican Commissioners that a debt of $85,000,000 should be acknowledged by Mexico as representing the original debt and accumulation of interest over many years. The settlement thus effected, or rather the means by which it was brought about, provoked a storm of indignation among the advanced Liberals. Its ratification by Congress was stoutly contested, and a popular outbreak, in which students for the first time took a prominent part, caused bloodshed in the streets and threatened a revolution.

In this excited state of the capital there were fortunately some who kept their heads. Porfirio Diaz had now been re-elected President, and his inauguration was due in the following month, so a compromise was effected with the outgoing González Ministry, by which the matter was left for the decision of the in-coming President.

An overwhelming preponderance of voters had demanded that Diaz' strong hand should be restored, in the belief that he could raise the nation out of the new difficulties in which it had become enmeshed. Out of 16,462 votes cast at the election for the President, he received no fewer than 15,969. Slowly but imperceptibly a new national life, or perhaps a higher patriotism, had entered Mexico. Old party lines became obliterated when the whole future of the country was at stake, and it became a question of supporting or refusing adhesion to the one man who it was felt could save the situation. There were still "Anti-Porfiristas" in 1884, men who held strong and bitter feelings against the

autocratic President, but Diaz' success in his first Administration and the events which so quickly followed his withdrawal had immensely increased his reputation with the country.

On December 1st, 1884, General Diaz went to the National Palace, was inaugurated unostentatiously, desiring that there should be as little ceremony as possible, and took up the mantle of President, which he has never since relinquished. Diaz has been President of Mexico for twenty-one successive years—for twenty-six years in all—and he will find it difficult to persuade his countrymen to elect any one else. There are no "Anti-Porfiristas" nowadays.

His long Presidency will be treated here as one, for the divisions of terms are merely those of time, and in no way mark stages in the development of his life's work.

It was under most depressing conditions, even for one so used to overcoming obstacles as himself, that he entered upon his task to rule Mexico for the second time. In those days he took many despotic measures. It was not a time for gentleness or delay. Prompt action was necessary. Examples had to be made, and Diaz meted out justice with no light hand. He went to the Treasury, and, in his own picturesque words quoted at the opening of this chapter, found it empty. The Republic's credit, always a very delicate plant, was sickly unto death.

Congress voted for bringing the Minister of the Interior and the Secretary of the Treasury in the González Administration to trial with respect to a large deficit which was alleged in the national accounts, but the enterprise was not encouraged. Little good was to be hoped from a financial exposure. The new President had other and more practical proposals in view.

Before he had been six months in power President Diaz set about economies by ordering a reduction of from fifteen to fifty per cent. in salaries of all Government employés receiving more than $500 per annum. He led an example by cutting down his own salary from $30,000 to $15,000, or exactly half, forthwith. The restoration of the nation's credit was the first indispensable step if the bright future in industrial development which he foresaw for Mexico was to be realised. No matter

who suffered, or what suffered, the good faith of the nation to its creditors was the paramount consideration.

Payments of railway and other subsidies—the schemes upon the rapid advance of which he built such great hopes—were suspended. Treasury bonds for $25,000,000, to provide for immediate wants, were issued. A law for the consolidation of the national debts, in which England's claims received recognition, was carried through, and arrangements for the payment of interest on terms satisfactory to all were shortly afterwards completed.

Foreign credit was by such means as these slowly restored, and a new Mexico—prosperous, enterprising, peaceful, and contented—came gradually into existence. The high aims which Diaz set before himself at the outset of his rule, and sacrificed much to accomplish, are all the more noteworthy, as, by the short-sighted policy of many Presidents who preceded him, the just claims of the foreign creditor had received scant attention. The future welfare of the country had been allowed to suffer to serve the interests of the moment.

Obligations contracted with the foreigner were met, and the use of foreign capital enjoyed, but it was not until 1894–5 that revenue and expenditure balanced in the home budget. A succession of deficits indicated a peril which, up to that time, still threatened the stability of the country.

Fortunate, indeed, has it been for Mexico that she had a strong man at the head of affairs during the past quarter of a century. He has carried his country through probably the greatest economic crisis with which a nation has ever been faced. Hardly had the era of settled peace been well established, and the last traces of the revolutionary period effaced, than the rapid fall in the value of silver threatened the undoing of all that he had attempted, and of the great projects to which he stood committed. We who live with all the advantages of a stable currency based on gold can hardly realise what this meant.

Mexico produced gold to a small extent, but the basis of her monetary system, and until that time the chief source of

her wealth, had been silver. Some one hundred and fifty million ounces of silver are yearly produced in the world, of which nearly fifty-five millions come from Mexico. The State depended for its economic life on the products of the silver mines, which had been worked for centuries. The Mint struck a silver Mexican dollar, five of which were worth £1 sterling in the world's markets. By the depreciation of the white metal, values so changed that not five, but ten Mexican dollars—now a trifle more—were required as the equivalent of the British sovereign.

The country was committed to the path of progress—harbours were being deepened, railroads constructed, new highways cut, great public works undertaken. All this necessitated the employment of foreign capital and the goodwill of the foreign investor, whose interest and confidence in the industrial development of Mexico President Diaz had left no stone unturned to secure. Foreign capital meant payment in gold, and payment on a gold basis required that for every one silver dollar hitherto paid he had now to find two.

Looked at from any point of view, this turn of affairs would seem to foretell national bankruptcy. It has not made Mexico bankrupt, but it has greatly altered her economic conditions. If it has been a burden, it has also been a stimulant to greater enterprise on the part of her people.

Diaz determined that whatever the depreciation of the silver dollar, the State's obligations to her creditors should be met in full, and everything has been paid on a gold value. He has gone on handing out two dollars for one, and Mexico still flourishes. She has learnt to become self-reliant. It is necessary to bear in mind that, whatever the rate of exchange, the purchasing power of silver remains practically the same for home products. The dollar still has the dollar's value in Mexico for anything Mexico produces; it is only the foreigner who sends in his cotton goods, his machinery, his wines, his ale, who wants two dollars for one when he presents his bill.

The fall in the value of silver has had in Mexico the same effect as a high protective tariff. When the people learnt that their bills for articles of foreign origin were doubling, they found

there was a great deal they could do without, and still more they could produce or manufacture for themselves. New industries sprang up on every hand, and the additional revenue gained from them went to restore the balance thrown out by the drain to foreign creditors. An essentially mining country is becoming transformed into one great hive of manufacture for home-consumption and of agricultural production for foreign exports.

Factories now flourish in every town. Manchester goods, which were formerly the common clothing of the Indians, are made in the country. Blankets and other woollen goods, from the coarsest to the finest qualities, are turned out from native looms. Leather work gives employment to thousands of people. Toluca beer is ousting the most famous British and German brands, and brewing is becoming a national industry. Even bricks and bottles, hardware and haberdashery, are now made in the country. The import of machinery still continues, while the export of agricultural produce increases, and Mexico is each year becoming more and more self-supporting. The peon remains a lazy workman, although often possessed of dog-like devotion to his master. He has been so long trampled on, so long ill-fed and ill-educated, that he is only now awakening to a new life, and feeling some energy born within him.

Diaz gave to Congress a report on his twelve years' administration, from 1884 to 1896. Half a century of civil and foreign wars, and loans obtained on ruinous terms to satisfy the needs of the day, had, he pointed out when tracing the early years of the Republic, brought the public exchequer to a state of chaos.

"This financial disorganisation was worse than anything in our political affairs; it fostered discontent, and hindered all, or almost all, progressive movement in the nation. After the consolidation of the Republic the crisis was less acute, the fiscal balance more nearly approached equilibrium, the payments were less irregular. But although diminished, the evil still existed, and its complete and radical remedy dates from only yesterday. When, in December of 1884, I returned to the charge of the first magistracy of the Republic, on the vote of the people, the financial crisis had again assumed alarming aspects. . . .

"This very grave situation, which had been so prolonged as to cause almost paralysis in the execution of the great constructive improvements already begun, and came near to provoking an explosion of popular discontent, called for an immediate and radical solution."

This was sought and found in a reduction of the foreign debt by a Convention agreed to in London, leaving the way open for a conversion of stock bearing 6 per cent. interest to 4½ per cent., proposals for the redemption of the floating debt, and other financial measures, so that when a new loan was offered for subscription it was a great success.

"The loan of 1888 (Diaz writes to Congress) has shown what credit the country enjoys in the foremost markets of Europe. This is of inappreciable value to the nation, and helps to inspire confidence to foreign capital, which is so necessary for the development of our wealth.

"It would be difficult to exaggerate the benefits obtained from the two great financial combinations effected by the laws of June 22* and by the raising of the loans.

"By virtue of these, Mexico's foreign credit was consolidated, the National Treasury, which had been so completely exhausted, saw the near possibility of meeting the demands that the extension of the administrative services had raised considerably, and the greater part of the immense liability that had been weighing on the nation was removed."

By the year 1890 Diaz was able to convert the railway debts, which were at short call, into bonds at a longer term of payment so as to distribute the cost of these immense undertakings more equitably between the present and future generations who will benefit by them. Ten years later, so solidly had Mexican credit been built up, that he was justified in using these words when reporting to Congress the conversion of the Mexican National Debt, which was successfully carried out in 1899, with the co-operation of a number of banking houses in Berlin, London and New York, and the National Bank of Mexico:

"This financial operation, which has recently been completed,

* On the subject of the Home and Foreign Loans of Mexico.

is worthy of figuring beside the most advantageous that even nations with the most substantial credit have been able to carry through. Our credit is so firmly cemented that a few months later the bonds of the new debt were already above par, in spite of the unfavourable conditions of the European markets."

There is nothing eloquent in these two sentences quoted from his speech to Congress, but what an epitome they are of his country's advancement. A little while back the memory recalls the arrival of foreign squadrons at Vera Cruz to collect by force the repudiated debt. Mexico was divided, distrusted, dishonoured, bankrupt, sunk below the position occupied to-day by the most turbulent of the Central American Republics. Foreign credit is a most delicate instrument for measuring a nation's stability. It is affected by every ill-wind that blows. When Diaz was able to speak of a financial operation successfully accomplished with the Mexican Debt, " worthy of figuring beside the most advantageous that even nations with the most substantial credit have been able to carry through," he gave the best testimony that could be advanced of the entire regeneration of his native land.

Some may say that Diaz is inconsistent. The twenty-two years of continuous power he has enjoyed is a denial of his own convictions. He who, in war and peace, placed it in the forefront of his political creed that a President should not be eligible for re-election, has not himself been replaced. This is quite true. Time, however, has taught Mexico a good many things, and one of them is that this disability, which was deemed so essential to prevent usurpations of power in days of national turmoil, is no longer necessary in a period of peaceful development.

It had outlived its usefulness. To construct a bulwark against tyrants had been the aim of its designers. In the altered condition of affairs it served rather as a drag upon the nation's progress. A compulsory change of Presidents each four years threw the machinery of government out of gear.

So it came about that before Diaz' second period of office

expired in 1888 the nation decided to so amend the Constitution as to allow the President two consecutive terms. Four years later, when the dismissal of Porfirio Diaz in the midst of his great work for Mexico, still uncompleted, again agitated the country, Congress solved the question for all time by abolishing every limitation whatsoever.

In 1892, in 1896, in 1900, and again at the election of 1904, there was no other candidate for the Presidency. Porfirio Diaz has been allowed to build up the modern State of Mexico on the lines that he himself laid out, undisturbed by the rivalries of other would-be constructors, and it will be an imperishable monument of his fame.

His administration has been one of peace. Long as his term of power has drawn out, the foreign relations of Mexico under his rule will afford little matter for the future historian. He has laboured to be on good terms with all, and especially with his great neighbour in the north; and by commercial treaties and legations established in the capitals of both hemispheres has sought to make Mexico favourably known and to increase her trade. But the work that has made him great as a statesman, and by which he will be remembered, has been done at home.

The schools and libraries, public institutions and hospitals one meets with everywhere are all evidences of his fostering care. Nothing is too small or too big for his attention, and where he has himself set the example he has taught others to follow. Education, as has before been emphasised, is his ruling passion. He told Congress:

"The instruction of the people is so essential to democratic life that its progress and perfection, which monarchical governments regard as a charity, is with us one of our greatest duties."

This passage is characteristic of the great Republican.

Mexico's phenomenal development, amidst which the country has become rich and the people have learnt to be contented, must be attributed in no small measure to the railways, which carry its commerce to the United States and to the coast. They are from an engineering aspect some of the most wonderful

lines in the world, climbing to heights over 10,000 feet, and surmounting natural barriers which might well seem impassable. The railways in turn owe almost everything to the energy and initiative of President Diaz, who has been their stoutest champion. There were projects before Diaz came into power; companies had been formed, charters obtained, surveys completed, and in places a commencement had been made. The railway policy, cautiously begun by Juárez, and set back in the troubled time of his immediate successor, had never, however, much life in it until Diaz climbed to power, set about restoring order, and gave the foreign investor some sense of security.

In Mexico the great line, the one of which the people are themselves most proud, is the Mexican Central. There are others, the first of which was the English-built line to Vera Cruz—many others, and fine lines they are too; but the Mexican Central goes through the heart of the country, and carries a large proportion of its commerce. Its origin dates back to 1874, when a line from the capital to the city of Leon was approved. Funds for its construction could not be found, and the project lagged.

President Diaz enlarged the charter, giving powers of construction up to the Texan frontier. Shortly before he left office in 1880, he had granted the concession to the Mexican Central Railroad Company, Limited, which had been incorporated in the State of Massachusetts, U.S.A., for the purpose. The grant was liberal, providing for a subsidy of $15,200 per mile, the right of free importation of materials for construction, repair, and operation for fifteen years, and exemption from all taxation until after the expiration of fifty years from the completion of the line. It authorised the building and operation for ninety-nine years of a standard gauge railway and telegraph line from the capital through all centres of population of Central Mexico to Paso del Norte, with branch lines to the Gulf and Pacific Coasts.

In the middle of October, 1880, operations were begun in Mexico City. The construction of the international bridge over the Rio Grande at El Paso was commenced shortly afterwards.

The line was built in two sections, one extending from the capital north, and the other from El Paso south. These two parts were joined near the city of Fresnillo, State of Zacatecas, in 1884, completing 1,224 miles of railway. Branches have since been thrown out in every direction, smaller companies bought up and amalgamated, and now the Mexican Central controls 3,300 miles of railroads.

The gross earnings for 1884, the first year after the main line was completed, were $3,742,221.21.

The gross earnings for 1902 were $21,132,226.87.

In 1884 the gross earnings per mile were $2,648.33.

In 1902 they were $8,062.47, showing an increase in business per mile of over three hundred per cent. Over 70 per cent. of the population of Mexico inhabits the States which are served by the Mexican Central Railway. Of the great cities of the Republic there are but five of over 35,000 inhabitants which are not reached by the rails of this company. The great mineral belt of Mexico, which has produced nearly one-half of the silver now existing in the world, extends from south-east to north-west parallel to the main line, and has contributed directly or indirectly more than fifty per cent. of the Company's revenue.

To such an extent has the influence of improved transportation facilities been felt that many of the mines abandoned by the Spaniards on account of difficulties of operation are now Bonanza mines.

Other of the principal Mexican railways are:

The Mexican Southern.
The National.
The Mexican International. } Government Railways.
The Interoceanic.
The Tehuantepec.

All these lines, and their projected extensions, can be traced on the folded map at the end of this volume. A complete network of railways already covers the country. When all the branches and new lines now under construction are completed, Mexico, which lies between the eastern and western continents, will be crossed by seven great railroads, that will connect

its ports on the Pacific and the Atlantic. She will also have seven lines crossing the frontier into the United States at seven different points—not a bad record in railway development in thirty years.

Another of the most important public works fostered and encouraged by President Diaz has been the completion of the drainage of the valley in which Mexico City lies. Although standing at an altitude of 7,349 feet above sea level, the capital is completely surrounded by mountains, two of which are amongst the highest volcanoes in the world. It is probable that in dim and distant ages, millions, aye, billions of years ago—for time counted little in the making of the world—the whole of this valley was one vast lake. To-day some straggling lakes or lagoons still exist.

The legend of the Aztec foundation of the city is as follows :

They were a mighty people of vast numbers, immense wealth, and considerable artistic talent, living in crude luxury and employing slaves.

One fine day, maybe two or three thousand years ago, they came down to the shores of Lake Texcoco, which from its dimensions must have appeared to them a huge sea. They were pleased at its appearance, and, finding a high rocky prominence upon its shores, camped. Here an unexpected sight met their eyes. Perched on the stem of a large prickly pear, or cactus, stood a golden eagle of great size and beauty ; the wings of the bird were extended towards the rising sun, and in his talons he held a wriggling serpent. The Aztecs took this as a good omen, and at once decided to build a city on the spot.

The tradition of the eagle has descended through all times, and is preserved on the banner of Mexico to-day.

As the bird perched on the cactus was the origin of the city, the Aztecs called their new camp " Tenochtitlan," from " tuna," a cactus. But in later years the name was changed, in honour of the great war-god of the Aztecs, to " Mexitli."

Naturally in those early days houses were very primitive. They were covered with reeds, cactus, palms, or like materials, supported on poles cut in the neighbouring forests ; just as huts

in the tropical parts of Mexico are made to-day. But it was not long before these rude dwellings were replaced by more substantial erections, and the great *teocali*, or temple of the Aztec gods, was built—a pyramid over a hundred feet high, approached by one hundred and forty steps.

When Cortéz came to the country he stood on this pyramid and gazed on the wonderful scene below and around him. Here he decided to build his capital. At the close of the century which witnessed the Spanish Conquest there were only 10,000 Indians surviving in the valley of their forefathers, and about as many foreigners had arrived.

But this population soon increased, and for two hundred and fifty years Mexico had the honour of being the largest city on the great Western Continent.

It must not be imagined that Mexico City is in the middle of the Republic, although it was probably nearly central in Aztec territory. It is 1,500 miles from the north-western boundary of Mexico, two hundred miles from the Gulf, four hundred from the Pacific coast, and six hundred from the boundary of Guatemala. These figures give some idea of the vastness of the country which General Diaz governs.

Now this swampy lake was a ridiculous place by which to build a town, because, being completely surrounded by high land, there was no outlet whatever for the water which poured down from the mountain sides and lay, as it were, at the bottom of a basin. So long as the level of the lake remained fairly stationary this was all very well; but when the fearful floods of summer swamped the valley, there was nowhere for the water to flow, and consequently, the city was continually submerged. Two of the most terrible floods occurred in 1552 and 1629.

As early as 1607 works for the relief of the city from floods were undertaken by the Spanish Viceroys. To-day the Mexican Central Railway runs along a huge cut through the mountain ridge a dozen miles in length—the Tajo de Nochistongo—which Enrico Martinez (originally written Maartens), a famous engineer, Dutch by birth, began in that year with the object of affording an outlet for the waters. Fifteen thousand Indians were kept

employed on the excavation. It was attended by frightful mortality, thousands of labourers perishing by neglect and disease. The treasure of the country was freely poured out upon the undertaking.

As originally designed it was partly tunnel and for a time water ran through, but, owing to imperfect acquaintance with the engineering problem presented, this herculean dyke never really answered its purpose.

General Diaz had ample opportunity for considering the problem. Little of his early life had been spent away from the South, but the prospect of a flooded capital was never absent from the mind of a Mexican, and the desirability of overcoming nature's obstacles had appealed to him with especial force when he was besieging the Imperialists in Mexico City. It was one of the first matters to which he turned his attention as President in 1884. The plan finally carried out was the result of long study of the subject by a Mexican Indian, Don Luis Espinoza, an engineer of remarkable power and brilliant gifts. Work was begun in 1885—a furtive start was made six years before—and though subject to delays from lack of funds, especially at the outset, the scheme was completed in 1900.

What Espinoza has done is to form a drainage system by canals and conduits collecting much of the flood-water from the upper levels of the valley and leading it away from Mexico City to the mouth of a tunnel. The drainage from the city itself is brought to the same point, and the tunnel is cut six miles through the mountains and discharges into the Tula River. This daring and colossal undertaking, carried out with complete success, cost Mexico $16,000,000.

The great cut of the Tajo de Nochistongo has not been utilised; indeed, the Mexican engineers have chosen to find their outlet in another direction. Espinoza began to carry out the work for the Government himself. Afterwards it was given into the hands of contractors, but he continued as chief engineer and inspector of the tunnel for the Government until its completion, and at present occupies the important position of engineer and architect to the Government Board of Public Works.

General Diaz took the greatest personal interest in the enterprise, and aided it by every means in his power, appointing a *Junta Directiva*, or special board of management, whose members were Don Pedro Rincón Gallardo (the present Minister in London), Don Casimiro Collado, Don Agustín Cordon, Don Francisco Rivas Gongora, and Don José Yves Limantour (for several years the Chairman of the Board). As a proof of these gentlemen's devotion to the duties they had undertaken, it may be mentioned that out of one thousand seven hundred and eight meetings held during the fifteen years the drainage scheme was under construction

Don Pedro Rincón Gallardo	attended	946	meetings.
Don Casimiro Collado	,,	1,477	,,
Don Agustín Cordon	,,	584	,,
Don Francisco Rivas Gongora	,,	1,257	,,
Don José Yves Limantour	,,	1,052	,,

Of this patriotic band only two are now alive, viz: General Rincón Gallardo and Señor José Yves Limantour, both of whose names occur frequently in these pages.

As this is probably the largest drainage scheme in the world and the tunnel was, at the time it was cut, one of the longest in existence, some particulars of the engineering work should be of interest. I am indebted for them to Mr. J. Fletcher Toomer, A.M.Inst.C.E., the chief engineer and general manager for Messrs. Reid & Campbell, who contracted for the work.

Nearly six and a quarter miles of tunnelling were built through a mountain in six and a half years. The tunnel still ranks fifth in the world in order of length, as the list below shows:

Simplon	12	miles,	444 yards.
St. Gothard	9	,,	564 ,,
Mont Cenis	7	,,	1,730 ,,
Arlberg	6	,,	404 ,,
Tequixquiac (The Desaque, Mexico)	6	,,	288 ,,
Hoosac (United States of America)	4	,,	685 ,,
Severn (Great Western Railway)	4	,,	624 ,,

A canal about 35 kilometres long has been cut from Mexico City north to the foot of the mountains. At this point the tunnel begins, and keeps due north under the mountains, coming out in the valley of Tequixquiac. Its exact length is 10 kilometres 14 metres. It has been built on designs furnished by the Mexican Government's engineers, and the materials used were chosen by them. The fall is 1 foot in 1388.88 feet. The chord of the arc of the tunnel and the height are each nearly fourteen feet. The arch of the tunnel is composed of four concentric rings of hard brick, and the invert with cement blocks, both backed by volcanic stone.

Water existed in nearly the entire course of the tunnel in large quantities. In the softer parts the ground always swelled, whilst in the harder parts, if not supported, it invariably cracked off.

On the line of tunnel are twenty-five shafts, 400 metres apart, having an inside measurement of 7 feet by 10 feet (corner measurement, the sides being curved), lined with 18 inch brickwork; the depth of the shallowest being 66 feet and of the deepest 301 feet. From north and south of each of these shafts the tunnel was constructed. When the piercing of the mountain was completed daylight could be seen through from end to end.

The quantity of water encountered in the shafts varied from 350 gallons to 1,000 gallons per minute, the total discharge at the mouth of the tunnel being 6,000 gallons per minute, the surrounding country being gradually drained as the construction of the tunnel proceeded.

The following data will give some idea of the vastness of the undertaking.

One hundred and eight engines were employed in pumping, winding, ventilating, sawing, mortar-making and brick-making.

Five locomotives were used to haul material.

The materials used in the construction of the tunnel were 22,000,000 bricks, all made on the works at the rate of 30,000 daily; 1,000,000 artificial stone blocks, made at the rate of 1,000 daily; 20,000 cubic metres volcanic stone; 25,000 cubic metres mortar; 5,000,000 B.M. of lumber; 20,000 tons of coal

were burned in the engines and forges; 10,000 cords of oak wood were used in lime-burning.

Three thousand people were employed during those six and a half years, and it is greatly to the credit of the Mexicans that during the last four years of this period, with the exception of a small handful of heads of departments, the entire work was accomplished by Mexican operatives and peons themselves.

From the point of discharge of the tunnel into the Tula River the water brought down from the Mexico Valley flows many miles to the coast, and finally empties itself at the Gulf port of Tampico.

It was a great day when the advance gallery was finished, and there was a hole from the mouth of the tunnel to where it was to join the canal. General Diaz, some of his Ministers, and all the members of the Drainage Board were present. Many of them descended through No. 1. shaft into the tunnel. They found their way to a point where only six feet of earth remained to be removed.

President Diaz was gleeful. He had come from the city to open the communication himself. A pick had been already prepared, with a silver plate on its polished handle, suitably inscribed for the occasion.

Mr. Toomer, who was standing beside him, handed him the implement, and held the coat of which the President quickly disencumbered himself. With might and main he picked away the earth, and then stepping through the hole he had himself made, exclaimed jubilantly:

"There now, the tunnel is at last a fact."

What a contrast this modern engineering is to the primitive old arrangement, when a stone wall was built round Mexico City, so that when the town became flooded by rain, the residents might pump the water up over the wall until they made the basin dry! In the chief thoroughfare—San Francisco Street—there is a mark on one of the corner houses showing where the last flood reached, and that is about ten feet above the pavement.

The tunnel and canal have been finished, and have proved that they are more than equal to the work for which they were

constructed. This great engineering feat has turned the swampy Valley of Mexico into fertile and well-drained land, and from a fever-stricken city laid out on a quagmire has evolved a healthy capital standing on dry foundations. It has done much more than remove the evils and risk of flood. Now, for the first time in all the centuries that the Valley has been peopled, an outlet has been provided, Mexico City has been able to lay down the most perfect system of sewerage and sanitation, and halting at nothing, has spent six million dollars on the work. That the city should have been able to exist so long under the old conditions is a tribute to the qualities of the Mexican climate at these high altitudes, and a defiance of everything that the sanitarian teaches. Epidemics have at times brought fearful punishment for the neglect of hygienic laws, but all that is now happily past.

When I was first there in 1900 all the drains were up—they had been up for a year, and seemed likely to be disturbed for several more. Dreadful smells issued, and it was little wonder that the death-rate averaged sixty per thousand. Looking down the new sewers one could see water four feet below the surface—black, filthy-smelling water. The natives did not seem to mind odours and want of sanitation, or the extraordinary sights one saw at every street corner would not have been permitted.

On one occasion I actually heard a military band giving an afternoon concert round an open sewer! It was their habit to play every Thursday in that thoroughfare, and although the entire street was up, and black mud and drain-pipes littered the pathway, the band found standing room among the débris, and, unhindered by awful odours, gave their usual concert, the Mexican Indians thoroughly enjoying the combined music and smell.

Mexico is built more or less on piles, no longer sticking up above the surface as in old Aztec days; thus it happens that many of the houses and churches are crooked. The foundations being swampy and insecure, earthquakes upset the perpendicular. It is a city of crooked perpendiculars.

When digging at the back of the Cathedral, where the great Aztec Temple once stood, some wonderful remains were unearthed. I saw an altar just as it was found in the black mud. It weighed some tons, and was almost perfect ; indeed, it is now one of the most interesting relics in the Museum hard by. Skulls, cross-bones, and other devices are carved upon it, forming a frieze a yard wide. It is one metre ninety-two centimetres wide in front, and the sides are one metre sixty-five centimetres in length. There are four rows of skulls, each row composed of seven skulls and six pairs of cross-bones. The skulls are in profile, and the cross-bones are short and thick. They alternate, instead of the cross-bones being placed under the skulls as we are accustomed to see them.

In this chapter we have seen how modern Mexico, by modern Mexican finance, has been built up on the very spot chosen by the Aztec people of old for their home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DAILY LIFE OF THE PRESIDENT.

LET me open this chapter with a peep at charming domestic felicity; could anything be more home-like than the following scene?

The door opened, peals of laughter, and merry children's voices sounded from the drawing-room. There among the pretty, dainty French furniture, little tables covered with miniatures, photos of the Emperor of Germany, Alfonso of Spain and other crowned heads, happy little boys in English sailor suits and dear little girls were playing. They were the grandchildren of Porfirio Diaz.

The stern President of Mexico was wreathed in smiles as a little girl held up her doll for him to kiss, which he pretended he would not do. The more he refused, the more she persisted, and of course the mite won, while the President's spouse, who nursed the newest baby of the party, laughed merrily at the conquest of her husband. Such a home-like scene was delightful. The children love "Grandpapa," who takes the keenest interest in all their little doings, and plays with them like a boy when the calls of the State permit, for this great man, this ruler and organiser, is very human, very lovable, and absolutely adored by all his family. His son, who is already himself a father, kisses his hand in respectful salutation whenever they meet, and then the two chat and laugh like brothers and friends, throwing all reserve and formality aside.

It is this second side of the President that is so interesting. The world thinks of him only as a soldier, a ruler, a dictator, and

Photo by WAITE.]

The President in his chair of office.

[*Page* 348.

The National Palace. The bell in the middle window is rung on 15th September by the President, when he declares "independence."

[*Page* 349.

a man of power ; but his friends know him as a kindly, courteous gentleman, with a keen sense of humour, a love of fun, and a deep sympathy for children, or for animals. The softer side is noticeable in every action of the home, where the life as nearly approaches the ideal as any I know.

The President has the heart and simplicity of a boy, the wisdom and character of a sage.

What a happy little family party!

It seems well-nigh impossible when gazing on such a scene to believe that this man holds the fate of some twenty millions of people in the palm of his hand, to realise his absolute power over such a vast tract of land, one of the richest for its size this earth knows. One admires his delightful, lover-like behaviour to his wife, his fatherly goodness to his children, his boyishness with his grandchildren, and his extraordinary power of turning acquaintances into friends, and friends into staunch allies.

It is a rare gift, this magnetic attraction, and one that Diaz possesses in a marked degree. All great men have their enemies as well as their friends ; but Diaz' enemies have decreased with years, his friends increased, while his own greatness has made itself more and more manifest.

There is no doubt that Madame Diaz has been of inestimable help to her husband. She is a woman of immense tact, is fond of society, and mixing freely with ambassadors and foreigners, learns by personal contact the feelings of their countries. Royalty is so often surrounded by an impenetrable cloak of conventionality that it is impossible for them to get at the truth of anything. Advisers and courtiers put matters in exactly the light they personally wish them presented, and that light is often only for party or private gain. This is not so in Mexico. President and Madame Diaz know the temper of their country ; and although so far removed from London, Berlin, or Paris, they are constantly in touch with those great centres, and are more up-to-date than many reigning heads in Europe.

Hidalgo declared the Independence of Mexico on the 16th September, 1810—as already described in Chapter II.—and the anniversary of that day is still kept.

In the evening General Diaz, accompanied by all his Ministers and officials, enters the large salon of the Palace, known as the Ambassadors' Hall, because it is there he receives the foreign representatives accredited to Mexico. A life-size portrait of the Kaiser, sent by his Majesty as a personal gift to the President, for whom apparently he entertains the greatest admiration, is one of the most recent additions to this gallery.

The anniversary is a great event. The palace is gaily decorated without, the cathedral on the right is illuminated, the Municipal Palace opposite is brightly lighted, while below in the Zocolo thousands and thousands of rich and poor are assembled. Few of them realise that they are walking on what was once the great Aztec Temple, that below their feet are still altars and urns, sacrificial stones and calendar pillars, that some of the great serpents' heads are still buried beneath their feet; for although much has been dug up, much still remains. So historical is the spot from which the Independence of Mexico is commemorated.

As the clock of the cathedral advances towards eleven, the mass of eager faces is raised to a central balcony window of the Palace. The beams of the moon play upon their features from that deep, dark and wonderful sky where shooting stars chase one another across the heavens. The warmer glow from the electric light illumines the features of that motley crowd below. The red blankets of the men add warmth and colour, their white cotton shirts and trousers glisten in the light. The women draw their *robozos* of many hues closer over their heads or hitch up the babies tied to their backs, but one and all are silent and expectant.

Slowly the hand of the clock moves on, and just one minute before eleven, the windows on that balcony are thrown open and General Diaz, in evening dress, wearing his Presidential ribbon across his breast, steps forward, holding the flag of Mexico in one hand. The Ministers close in behind, and amid an almost death-like silence from that vast throng of humanity below, the President raises his hand and pulls the cord of the huge bell hanging over his head eleven times, while its tones clang forth the notes

Aztec stone cylinders representing cycle of fifty-two years, by which time was measured.

[*Page* 350.

Ornamentations from Aztec Wall of Serpents.

Stone serpent's head from Wall of Serpents.

[*Page* 351.

of independence as they did when Hidalgo pulled it nearly a hundred years ago in the tower of the church at Dolores, whence the bell was removed to Mexico City in 1896.

The President of the Republic then calls out in a loud and melodious voice :

"*Viva la Independencia, y viva Mexico!*"

The silence is broken, the solemn moment has passed, shouts of joy rise from thousands of voices below and rend the stillness of the night air.

A dramatic moment truly.

All official entertaining is done at the Palace where the bell rings that note of freedom. The President's house at Cadena is a home in every sense, but it is neither big enough nor grand enough for public entertainments. Accordingly several dinners and balls are given by the President and Madame Diaz every year at the Palace on the Zocolo.

The Palace is large, as will be seen by the photograph ; it contains many windows in a row, and these windows run round four sides, as the centre is a huge courtyard—two, in fact.

There are three important banquets given every year, and ladies are present at each.

At the appointed hour the guests drive into the big patio below. The staircase is handsomely decorated with plants and palms, and, in true Mexican fashion, is out of doors ; that is to say, it rises straight from the patio with its pillar-arched walls. At the top of the stairs are the cloak-rooms, and then a long passage leads to the reception room of the President and his consort.

This passage is decorated in red, with a soft-toned red carpet which looks gay and bright when lighted, and the equerries, chiefs of the Presidential guard, and staff line both sides ; between them the guests pass. At the end of this long passage is the green and gold drawing-room. Here, near the door, stands the President of Mexico with his wife on his left and his Ministers behind him.

At these official banquets, of which one is given on New Year's Day, another in commemoration of the Independence, and a

third on the 5th February, to celebrate the Constitution, covers are laid for sixty.

At eight o'clock dinner is announced, and the President, giving his arm to the wife of the representative of the United States of America, who is the only full ambassador in the city, leads the way.

It is a splendid banqueting hall; well-proportioned, with a fine ceiling, and decorated in vieux rose colouring of the style of Louis Quatorze.

Like Royalty, the President and his wife occupy the middle of the table. General Diaz, with the lady before mentioned on his right, and the Vice-President's wife on his left, places the foreign Ministers and their wives alternately round the table, intermingled with Mexican Ministers, the State giving precedence to foreign Ministers. Madame Diaz, from 1905 (the first occasion after the position was inaugurated), places the Vice-President of Mexico on her right.

It is a splendid scene in this land of flowers, and the President's wife is a lady of immense taste. The table is always charmingly arranged, and the Palace which was, so to speak, in rags and tatters and encumbered by debt when General Diaz first became President, has now handsome silver plate and beautifully cut glass.

Everything is just as refined and charming as in the home of the President himself.

There is music during dinner, and after the usual courses, followed by the tropical fruits given for dessert, the party retires to one of the drawing-rooms, where coffee is served and a pleasant hour passed, the President and his wife mingling freely with the guests. It is often late before these public functions are over, yet General Diaz is always an early riser. By six o'clock he is generally dressed. He has a cup of coffee and begins his private correspondence. He is most methodical—reads all his own letters and puts notes on the top of each for his secretaries to answer.

At nine every morning his carriage is ready and he drives to the Palace. Here, his rooms are close to the great Zocolo, from

which hundreds, almost thousands, of electric trams arrive and start daily. The Palace is guarded by soldiers. Driving into the yard the General is met by the Governor of the Palace, General Pradillo, the Chief of the Staff, Major Escandon, and the two equerries-in-waiting for the week; these gentlemen take that duty by turn.

Upstairs lightly runs the President, for those seventy-five years do not trouble him, and he rarely uses the lift. From nine to one o'clock every day he transacts the business of the State. Each Minister has two special audiences a week, with the exception of Señor Limantour (Finance) and General Gonzáles Cosio (War), who have three. Between the Ministers' audiences Diaz sometimes sees private gentlemen on important business.

About ten o'clock strawberries or fruit of some kind are brought in, and the President allows himself a few minutes leisure, otherwise an unceasing stream of business goes on from nine till one. At that hour, or as soon after as he can get away, the little coupée, with a handsome pair of horses, two men in dark green livery, with red, white and green Republican cockades, emerge from the inner court, and off home the General goes to his dinner. By that time, be it remembered, he has been working for six or seven hours. This midday meal is a very simple affair as far as society goes, for the home life of this great man is very home-like. More often than not he and his wife dine quite alone, or at most with some members of the family.

Three days a week he goes back to the Palace about half-past three, and remains till seven at the disposition of any and everyone who wishes to see him. There he sits alone. Quite unattended, the President sees his subjects and personally listens to their woes.

A list is submitted to him, generally of sixty or seventy names. He picks them out as he wishes, and the millionaire and the Indian peasant are each seen in turn. On his table are letter-blocks headed with the names of the departments of State, so that he makes his own notes under the name of the Minister to whom the subject applies. He promises a reply within a certain time, if an immediate decision is not possible.

It is a strange sight that procession waiting for private audience. The frock-coated, silk-hatted German Jew, the rough American mining engineer, the English company promoter, the ranch boy from the hacienda wearing his cowboy clothes and pistols, or the poor Indian squaw with her baby tied on her back who has come to proffer her little claim for a bit of land.

He sees them all; many cases he decides at once. He never acts against the law, although as one of his Ministers said to me, "In things that do not directly concern the law, our President exercises his own will."

It must be very trying to sit hour after hour listening to business of such a varied and diversified character, but General Diaz is a man with strong control over himself; he never appears bored, and rarely loses his temper. That he is often bored is certain; but he does not show it. That he has a temper in spite of his determination and control can be seen in the firm jaw and bearing of the man, but there are few living people who have seen him lose command of himself, even for a moment, during the last quarter of a century, although all know it is only mastery of himself that keeps that temper under control. After a long and tiring day he goes home, and the cloud of care and fatigue quickly passes away. He seldom mentions State affairs, and tries to throw off all worries in his appreciation of home life.

It is at these private audiences at the Palace that the President shines, so everyone who has had to do with him tells me. His clear-headed, far-seeing practicability dominates everything. He is a great reader of men, a lover of peace, and universally tries to patch up all quarrels. Sometimes books and maps have to be consulted at once, when an electric bell summonses equerries and secretaries, who are kept busy, for the General prefers to arrange all he can without delay, and when delay is necessary the business is transacted with as much despatch as possible.

Those three or four hours of public audience are tiring affairs, but three times a week they are gone through, year in, year out, and probably they do more to bring about a good understanding between President and people than anything else.

The President of Mexico.

[*Page* 354.

Photo by BELL.]

The President of U.S.A.

[*Page* 355.

I once laughingly asked Diaz if he had a pistol in his trouser pocket, knowing what extraordinary ruffians he sometimes gives audience to. He laughed.

"Pistol? No. I have not had such a thing in my hand for years. They know I trust them."

It is this direct contact with the people that is of such inestimable value. No courtiers intervene, no wire-pullers work puppets for their own ends, no bias is allowed, for every man or woman who wishes to see Diaz can see him, and sees him absolutely alone, where *unter vier Augen*—as our German friends would say—personal matters can be discussed, and any and every subject sifted to the bottom by this all-wise President.

Anyone can see the President of the United States of America, an American will say. Can he? I doubt it. Present yourself any day at the Executive in Washington, an annexe of the White House, and see if this is so. Policemen guard the door; pertinent questions are asked as to your business, and unless some very good reason showing a possible appointment is vouchsafed, the American is not allowed to enter. Once inside he sits in an entrance hall with dozens of others, surrounded by officialdom. From out that motley crowd, which itself was sorted before even getting so far, two or three specially favoured see the President; the others wait and wait, and finally go away on learning "the President is sorry, but he will not be able to see you to-day."

That same story is repeated day after day, week after week.

One only in hundreds desiring to do so sees the President at Washington, and only a small percentage of these get anything more than a handshake and rapid dismissal. Of course, the argument will spring up that Mexico has a population a quarter the size of the United States. Granted. But, even then, nothing like the same proportion of Amercians see their President as Mexicans see Diaz. And for argument again: the President of the United States has a vice-president, which means that two people minister daily to the wants of something approaching eighty millions. Only one man in Mexico ministered to the unruliness of nearly twenty millions, alone and unaided, for twenty-

five years, for the office of Vice-President was only inaugurated in December, 1904. Diaz has given ten or twelve hours a week listening to the personal affairs of his people, or those interested in his country's advancement, and he has been doing this for over a quarter of a century. Think of the hours of boredom all that must have entailed, boredom endured without a murmur ; but, on the other hand, see what it has been possible for one man single-handed, so to speak, to attain.

He has a grievance put before him ; that sore is laid bare and its depths probed ; the wound is dressed until the sore heals, and finally becomes a healthy growth.

There is no red-tapeism in the matter, no official pigeon-holing, which merely means the dusty burial of important facts. The discussion is stopped, the papers thrown into the basket and honestly destroyed, or if the matter is worth considering at all it is considered from every standpoint, discussed with the Minister to whose department it pertains, and settled as quickly as possible.

It was interesting to see and talk to that interesting personality Mr. Roosevelt shortly after my visit to Mexico. No greater contrast is possible than these two Presidents.

Diaz—calm, quiet, reserved, strong, determined, thoughtful and far-seeing.

Roosevelt—impetuous, enthusiastic, outspoken, fearless, hasty in action and hurried in forming opinions.

Both remarkable men, very remarkable men, and both utterly dissimilar in character as in physiognomy. Each admiring the other in a perfectly delightful way.

When I was in Washington, the most beautiful modern city in the world, I again saw my old friend, Secretary Colonel John Hay, who gave me his photograph taken in December, 1904, and consequently his last. He looked ill then, but was so keenly interested in Mexican affairs, and spoke so eulogistically of General Diaz, that I ventured on my return to England to ask him if he would write a few lines for this book.

He had already started for Europe when the letter arrived,

but on his return to Washington three months later he wrote the following :

"Department of State, Washington,
"June 20th, 1905.

"Dear Mrs. Tweedie,—

"I have received your letter of the 14th of March, asking me to contribute something to your 'Life of Diaz.'

"It would be a very great pleasure to me to have my name associated with yours in what I am sure will be a very interesting work, but I am obliged to decline all such requests, however agreeable and flattering they may be.

"I am, with many thanks,
"Sincerely yours,
(Signed) "John Hay."

Only a few hurried lines penned a week after his return to Washington from his last trip in search of health, when he must have been very busy, and delivered in London the day following his death.

Poor John Hay! America lost her greatest statesman, and the world probably the most able diplomatist of the day.

John Hay held the same post in America that Señor Mariscal holds in Mexico, viz., that of Foreign Minister. No more charming gentleman exists in Mexico than Mariscal. Diaz has no keener supporter. He has done much to foster and consolidate the good relations existing between his own country and other lands.

Like the President, Señor Mariscal was born in that queer old southern town Oaxaca, a few months before the chief he has served so ably. Like so many Mexicans he gained a degree in law, but his tastes were always political and on the Liberal side. For his views Santa Anna, when Dictator, banished him from the capital. He followed Juárez through the War of Reform. He was made a judge, served Mexico in Washington, was Secretary for Foreign Affairs (1863), besides having a hand in routing the French troops of Napoleon III. in the days of Maximilian.

This kindly, benevolent, courtly gentleman was given the post of Secretary of Justice and Public Instruction in 1868, by Benito Juárez, and at one time was Minister Plenipotentiary to England.

He is not only a lawyer and a politician but a scholar and an excellent linguist, French and English coming to him as easily as Spanish. For many years now he has been Secretary of Foreign Affairs, and has conducted the business of his portfolio so well that Mexico is at peace with all the world. He lives in an unfashionable quarter of the town, where he has more repose and leisure than he would have elsewhere, and where the home is very homelike, for his wife, a charming woman, was an American. Many Mexicans of note have married American wives, and a few have chosen Englishwomen.

Mariscal, speaking of America, said to me :

" We are on the best terms with the Government of the United States of America, and our northern neighbours show as much admiration for our President as confidence in the solidarity of peace and the reign of law in Mexico. Their confidence has been made manifest by the investment of five hundred million American dollars in this country. The basis of our diplomatic relations is mutual respect and complete justice.

" When the two Governments fail to come to an agreement they may submit the issue to arbitration. This Mexico and America did when the International Court of The Hague was set up, for the first international claim ever submitted to it came from these countries. On another occasion an umpire was appointed to sift a contested claim under Article XXI. of our old Treaty of 1848, which established arbitration for most cases of controversy between the two nations. Very recently we have accepted the proposal of the United States to negotiate a special treaty of arbitration similar to the arrangement signed between England and France in 1903."

But to return to Porfirio Diaz—it is a charming apartment wherein he sits daily with his Ministers. The Council Chamber, a large handsome room, has lately been decorated in dark moss-green and gold. A long table fills the centre, round

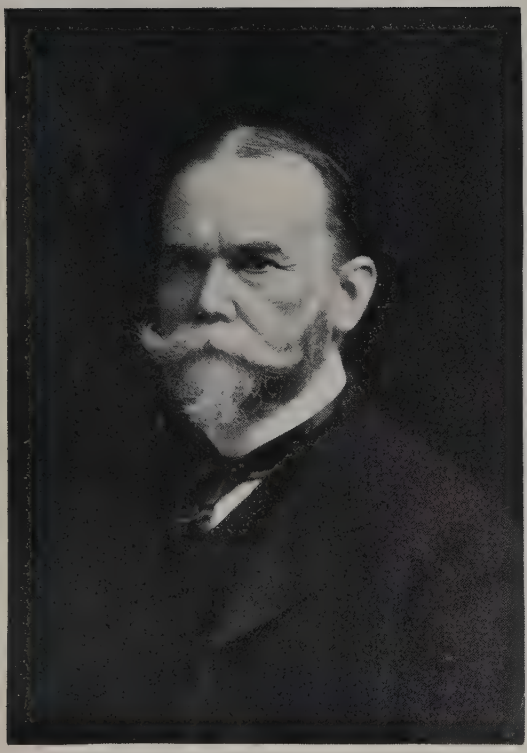

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Photo by MORA.]
Señor Ignacio Mariscal, Minister of Foreign Relations.

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which are the Ministers' chairs. General Diaz sits in a more ornate chair with the arms and the emblem of Mexico worked in brass over the head.

There are eight Ministers—

Ramón Corral, Vice-Presidente y Ministro de Gobernacion.

Lic. José Yves Limantour, Finance.

Lic. Ignacio Mariscal, Foreign Relations.

General Manuel González Cosio, War.

Lic. Justino Fernandez, Justice.

Blaz Escontria, Communicaciones.

Ingeniero Leandro Fernandez, Fomento, or Encouragement.

Lic. Justo Sierra, Instruccion Publica y Bellas Artes.

The first two, as just mentioned, have three private audiences a week in this room, the others two, unless something of importance intervenes. It is a delightfully comfortable place, and the handsome green and gold curtains, with their "R. M." (Republica Mexicana), and the old gold brocade of the walls give it a cosy look. Here all the business of the State is accomplished. When the Constitution is at stake, then both the President and Ministers are responsible before Congress, which acts as a sort of grand jury.

Beyond this Council Chamber is the President's private library —a snug room with books and carvings of a business-like nature, and beyond are suites of apartments, for the palace is a big place, and more handsome and imposing than one would imagine from the outside.

The day's work over, General Diaz enjoys his supper at home between eight and nine, followed by a game of billiards with an intimate friend, or some reading, and bed about eleven in the usual order of events. Probably no ruler in the world leads such a simple, happy, domesticated home-life as the head of the Republic of Mexico. He loves his family and finds amusement in his books.

Dinner at the President's is a delightful meal. Let us take one as an example.

Diaz had just arrived from the Palace, and his equerry was driving home as I entered. The porter below smiled and waved

his hand with a request to go upstairs. This said porter allows no one to pass, unless he has had orders. As I walked up the marble stairs lined with flowers, and passed the fine carved modern figures of animals which form the bottom of the balustrade, a bell tinkled. That was the porter announcing the fact from below that someone was on the stairs.

The usual two men in livery were supplemented by a third, who bowed and waved me along the gallery of the patio to the salon. The doors were open, and forward stepped Madame Diaz with her ever delightful welcome. It was only a family party, just the daughter, Madame de la Torre, who had given the splendid party a few nights before, Captain Diaz and his pretty little wife, Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandon and his handsome spouse Sofia, Madame Diaz' widowed sister and myself—nine in all, with the President and "Cármelita." All but two spoke English, a language Madame Diaz, Captain Diaz, his wife and Don Guillermo all know perfectly. Does that not show how universal English, with all its faults, really is? They spoke French, too, but not so well.

It so chanced that I had said a few days previously that I liked some of the Mexican dishes, and so, after a delightfully French *déjeuner*, the wife of the President had kindly ordered various *tomales* of chicken, sweet peppers and *chiles rellenos*, *i.e.*, green peppers stuffed with cream cheese. These peppers look almost like green figs, and although terribly hot, have a nice flavour, but as they are not spicy enough to suit the Mexican palate the inevitable chili sauce was dashed over them likewise. Last came another national dish, namely, *frijoles*, or beans. Served with thick brown sauce, parmesan cheese, and crisply-toasted tortilla (native maize pancake used as bread), they were excellent.

Everything belonging to Madame Diaz is delightful, her table is perfection. Pretty cloths of drawn thread, for which the Indians are so famous, English white china-figured bowls filled with forget-me-nots and roses in December, the most charming Tiffany silver plates, Salviati glass from Italy, dainty French coffee cups—everything has an air of taste and refinement, and

yet she has never been to Europe, and hardly knows the United States at all. But she has patterns and samples sent from everywhere, and the result is quiet, dignified, ladylike perfection. Like our Queen, too, she is never *outré* in her dress, and knows that the art of being well dressed is to be suitably attired.

Dinner announced, the President offered me his arm, and we proceeded past the flowers in the gallery to the dining-room. He was in the best of spirits—he always is, at any rate at home. Sometimes he may be severe at the Palace, but at home he is always gay—and young too. If something which he wants, such as a photo or letter, is mentioned, up he gets and fetches it. Age does not seem to have deprived him of his agility or his spirits.

He is a simple man in his tastes, rarely touches wine, which he gave up at a time when he used to suffer from headaches; and he never smokes nowadays, which for a Mexican is remarkable, as the men smoke cigarettes everlastingly.

Dinner over, the President again offered me his arm, and we went to the dear little Chinese room for coffee, which Madame Diaz dispensed herself.

Beyond is the billiard-room. The French table is covered by a marvellously embroidered cloth, which is the work of his eldest daughter, and he shows it with great pride.

Then comes a dear little boudoir, and beyond in the new house which they have just bought and connected, the most interesting room of all. It is a *salle d'armes*. General Diaz is a true soldier, and he had gathered arms of all sorts during his life, until he had made such a collection that he did not know what to do with them.

Madame Diaz did not approve of rows and rows of guns, pistols, and swords lining the rooms and passages, and so they made a compromise, and decided to ask Señor Fabres, the head of the Academy, if he could suggest anything in the way of decoration for a room. The result is perfect. Señor Fabres has made the walls of dull metals, copper, bronze, silver, or iron, and arranged the shields so charmingly with designs of nails that it is one of the most original rooms I have ever seen in my travels, and

probably the only perfect one of its kind extant. To get rid of the ugliness of three windows in a row, he has arranged sheets of dull iron on the walls, which look as if ripped back by shell to unfold the shaded yellow lights penetrating those windows, giving the idea of torn armour plate. The doors are treated in the same way, but the golden browns and oxidised greens of the whole effect make it artistic instead of heavy. Arms cover the walls, cleverly worked in with the designs. Mexican-lion, or leopard, skins are scattered over the polished floor, a couple of stuffed seats are made to rest upon old cannon, a weird animal's head forms the front of a writing-table, and in his huge mouth cannon-balls repose. The ingenuity and thought displayed are wonderful. Four large glass show-tables, raised on arms themselves, contain the chief treasures. Swords sent as presents from reigning sovereigns, pistols of all times, beautiful specimens of Toledo blades, ancient and modern guns and rifles. The President knows the history of each and all. Among them is a Maxim repeating gun standing in the middle of the room, sent by my old friend the inventor.

One fine sword ornamented in gold and studded with emeralds is a particular joy. It was given to General Diaz after his triumphal entry into Mexico City in 1876. He accepted this emblem of authority thirty years ago, and has not relinquished his authority yet.

"But where is your own sword?" I asked at last.

"It is not interesting enough to be here," he modestly replied.

"But it ought to be here, historically."

"Oh, no; it is not worth that, and besides, it is such an old and trusted friend that I like to keep it in my own dressing room."

But his son fetched it—a trooper's heavy sword, which had been worn by the General in all his great campaigns, just about as commonplace and cumbersome a weapon as could well be found; but its owner prized it, with all the enthusiasm of a born soldier.

He loves his pistols and his guns, his swords and his daggers, or rather those worn by other people, for he never seems to consider anything of his own is of value to anyone, but describes

how he acquired this or that particular treasure and its history, handling each with the true love of an old campaigner.

Later in the afternoon Don Guillermo de Landa y Escandon drove with me to call on the Minister of Finance to discuss the silver question, in the throes of which he was then engaged. Señor Limantour speaks for himself in the appendix to the volume on this subject, for silver is a matter of pure finance. The question of Mexico—the greatest silver-producing country in the world—being put on to a gold basis is of consequence to merchants all over the world, and the originator of this scheme has kindly given me his views on the subject.

Next to the President, Señor Don José Yves Limantour is the most prominent man in Mexico to-day. Although of French parentage, he was born in Mexico City, on December 26, 1854, and there he took his diploma in law in 1875. Señor Limantour is not only a delightful personality, a linguist, a man of reading and a traveller; but he is a remarkable financier. In appearance he is tall and thin, with clear-cut features, closely-cut white hair, and clean-shaven face except for a white moustache, but the most striking points are his lovely teeth, genial smile, and his courtly manners. Limantour is a born diplomat.

With his charming wife, who is the daughter of Senator Eduardo Canas, he lives in a house facing the gardens of the Alameda in Mexico City. It is a home of luxury and ease, for Señor Limantour inherited a fortune. He has two children living, one of whom, a daughter, is married to Señor Miguel de Iturbe, and is now residing in Paris. The younger, his son Guillermo, is not yet of college age.

To sum up in a few words what Limantour has done for Mexico is impossible. He has reorganised the finances of the country during the last ten years. Before he became Minister of Finance, fiscal years sometimes terminated with a deficit. Diaz was so punctilious in paying off foreign debts, he got into difficulties at home. It is as impossible for a Government as it is for an individual to allow expenditure to exceed income. By wise economy, by devoting his entire time to the one subject of finance, which Diaz with endless other calls upon him was no

longer able to do, by weeding out abuses, by modernising the fiscal system and ridding it of trammels inherited from the Spanish colonial *régime*, and finally by tireless industry and sustained effort, under which his health has at times broken down, Señor Limantour has accomplished what competent authorities, on the eve of his taking the portfolio of Finance, had pronounced impossible, viz., the conversion of a deficit into an annual surplus.

These recurring surpluses have now accumulated into a substantial reserve, which is still of goodly proportions, though the funds for great public works, and for the embellishment and sanitation of the capital, have been, and are still taken from it.

These and other undertakings, which are doing so much for the progress and civilisation of the country, would have been impossible but for the conditions of financial prosperity which are the result of the unremitting and intelligent labours of Limantour. It is but just to add that in his great task Limantour has enjoyed the unlimited confidence and unwavering support of the President of the Republic.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, it will be of interest to give the opinion of well-known writers on the subject of President Diaz himself, they anyway are not biased by personal friendship.

The great English author and Positivist preacher, Frederic Harrison, upon whom both Oxford and Cambridge have showered distinctions, is a warm admirer of General Diaz. Many pleasant chats we have had together over Mexico and her ruler, the pith of which I have persuaded Mr. Harrison to jot down for the benefit of the readers of this volume.

Such words, such praise, from the author of those famous biographies of Cromwell and Chatham mean much, for Mr. Harrison is not a man lightly carried away, but one accustomed to deal with history and politics in a masterful manner, and therefore the following pages are of particular value.

Frederic Harrison speaks of General Diaz as "the great Dictator of the West." He says :

" The restoration of Mexico to prosperity, order, and progress within our own generation is undoubtedly one of the most extraordinary, and also one of the most encouraging phenomena of modern civilization. The American nation of mixed race and dark traditions, which during the greater part of the eighteenth century had been a scene of European domination, of incessant revolution, and of economic distress, suddenly produced at least two men of commanding character, one of them a man of rare genius for government. Under their direction, Mexico, within a single generation, passed into an era of profound civil order, attained material prosperity, and gave an example to Europe of wise and progressive reform.

" The era of foreign oppression was closed nearly forty years ago by the heroic defence of the patriots led by Juárez and Porfirio Diaz. And the basis of the civil reform had been founded by Juárez some fifty years ago, by his fundamental law of equality of civil rights which annihilated the odious exemptions from civil jurisdiction of the clergy and all their dependents. But the intervention of Europe and the fatal expedition ordered by Napoleon III. prevented Juárez from completing his beneficent reform. And it was not until the accession of Porfirio Diaz to the Presidency in 1876 that the regeneration of Mexico began in earnest.

" The school of Auguste Comte, both in England and in France, has always watched the revival of Mexico and the career of its great President with special sympathy and admiration; and their organs in both countries have constantly sought to direct the attention of historians and politicians to the astonishing success of the political system there developed. The Presidency of Diaz, in fact, is a perfect type of the normal government such as Comte imagined it—a government of eminent capacity freely welcomed by an enlightened people—equally removed from dictatorial oppression as from democratic restlessness.

" In an eloquent article on Mexico, in 1899, by Mr. S. H. Swinny, now President of the Positivist Society, the writer says: 'Mexico stands firmer than ever, stronger, more united, and

more prosperous. Long before Mr. Bryce, in 1888, wrote in his "American Commonwealth" some doubts as to Mexican Independence, the work of reformation had begun, and Mexico, *the sentinel of Latin America*, was awake.'

"The article then continues:

> "There had been little in the early history of the country to herald a good issue to its troubles. It had passed from the dull repression of Spain to the licence of the war of liberalism. It had produced no great leader save in *pronunciamientos* and rebellions, it had no reputation if it were not for disorder and bad finance, nor was it easy to see whence salvation would come. The Church suppressed all freedom of thought, and the loss of political liberty was exploited by men who were incapable of aught but destruction. And yet, in the year 1818, before the Spaniards had been finally driven out, an Indian boy of twelve might be seen on his way to seek work in Oaxaca. Here in this boy, who did not even know Spanish, lay order, and freedom, and good government, for this was Juárez, the future saviour of his country."

* * * * * * *

> 'He was succeeded by Porfirio Diaz, who still sits as President of the Mexican Republic; nor can it be aught but a cause of wonder that Mexico has produced two such statesmen in one generation. How many nations have prayed for but one such, and have prayed in vain? Yet the Mexicans have shown that they deserved their good fortune by recognising and rallying to their leaders. With the great Republic of the North on their borders they hold the post of danger; they have made it the post of honour.'

"The number of the *Revue Occidentale*, Paris, May, 1905, contains an eloquent article (translated) by Agustin Aragon, on the restoration of Mexico by Juárez, and the continuation of the same work and its vast development by Porfirio Diaz. This restoration may be treated under nine distinct heads:

" 1. The maintenance of order and personal security.
" 2. The maintenance of peace and national independence.
" 3. The control of the military order under the civil.
" 4. The separation of spiritual and temporal authorities.
" 5. Freedom of worship and religious toleration.
" 6. Free, unsectarian, and universal education.
" 7. Financial integrity and public credit.
" 8. Economic progress and material prosperity.
" 9. Development of internal industry, rural and manufacturing.

" These ends, almost all of them equally necessary and vital, have been persistently pursued by the actual President over a period now of nearly thirty years. None of them have been neglected. But the most valuable of all have been order, peace, tolerance, and education. The most extraordinary feat of all was the formal suppression of the old usurpations of the Church, which, under obsolete laws of Spain, exempted the household, and it seems even the concubines, of a priest from liability to an action for debt in a civil court. In the words of Dr. Gabino Barreda : ' In effecting the complete separation of Church and State, in emancipating the spiritual power from the degrading control of temporal authorities (*i.e.*, in freeing the Church from tyrannical abuses and the State from interfering in religion), Mexico has taken a step more advanced than that of any other nation in securing an era of true civilization and moral progress.'

" The first Presidency of Porfirio Diaz, 1876, was mainly occupied with extinguishing the last embers of domestic revolution, and with the very difficult and delicate task of restoring diplomatic relations with the European and American powers with which Mexico had become embroiled. Owing to the state of internal and financial chaos in which Mexico had been involved since the War of Independence, she had been in military and diplomatic conflict for generations with almost every power in Europe or in America, great or small. The United States, the South American and Central American States, France, Britain, Spain, Germany, Italy, had all been public enemies or hostile creditors. It was a triumph of diplomacy to restore peaceful

relations with jealous neighbours and angry potentates. But it was done ; and for five-and-twenty years the foreign relations of Mexico have been tranquil and satisfactory.

" The peace and honourable independence of the country being secured, Diaz has devoted almost the whole of his seven terms of office to internal reform and industrial progress. Mexico has a population about one-third of that of the United Kingdom with an area five or six times as great. Its total expenditure on its army and navy is about one million and a half sterling. And that in a country the very existence of which has been menaced by all the Powers in turn for more than half a century. Happy is a nation of thirteen millions* which is content with a budget of six or seven millions sterling, almost entirely devoted to its internal administration.

" For twenty years the annals of Mexico have been uneventful and peaceful. What was one of the most wildly turbulent and insecure of all lands has become as safe and orderly as any in Europe. The finances have been placed on a sound basis, and the national credit has been restored. Foreign investments are easily obtained at rates similar to those of public undertakings in the United States. The extension of railways and other industrial works has been carried on with great success. New modes of agriculture and improved manufactures have been stimulated by the wise regulations of the Government. It has been truly said that, under President Diaz, the history of Mexico has been mainly that of economic and intellectual development. Can any judgment be more honourable to a ruler—or to the people which profits by his counsels ?

" The most striking and most original part of President Diaz' task has been the suppression—the peaceful and legal suppression—of the clerical domination under which Mexico had groaned for centuries. The disestablishment of the Church, the suppression of the monastic houses, and of the odious clerical perquisites and exemptions, were all carried out with less acrimony and less disturbance than in Italy or in France, and all of them have been accomplished far more effectually. The Catholic

* Probably about 20,000,000 in 1905.

religion has not been in any way prejudiced, and it is left to use all its spiritual forces undisturbed, whilst it is prevented from usurping the powers of the civil arm. Liberty of thought, liberty of worship, is completely guaranteed to all, whilst no religious community is suffered to claim a monopoly of privileges in the matter of marriage, burial, birth, or education.

"The system of public instruction in Mexico is one of the most liberal in modern States. It is free, secular, and compulsory, and it is worked without friction. In a race so mixed and so backward in culture, with its long traditions of Clerical obscurantism, the establishment of a system of popular secular education was a task of extraordinary difficulty. But Mexico happily possesses a body of enlightened savants and professors who have thrown themselves with enthusiasm into the work. The scientific, historical, and philosophical culture of Mexico is not behind that of Europe and the United States. The followers of Darwin, Auguste Comte, and Spencer, form an even larger proportion of the educated class.

"The triumphant success of the practical dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz is a signal proof of the power of a great statesman to revivify and regenerate his country. And it is also a proof that it is possible in a modern Republic to establish the unquestioned ascendancy of a great man along with the intelligent acceptance and the grateful support of a free people."

A glance at the history of the other Republics of the world will show that it is not only in his own country that General Diaz' position is considered unique.

Writing of the United States in his "American Commonwealth," the Rt. Hon. James Bryce says :

"The Constitution prescribes no limit for the re-eligibility of the President. He may go on being chosen for one four-year period after another for the term of his natural life. But tradition has supplied the place of law."

Washington, Jefferson, Maddison, Monroe, and Jackson each served two terms of four years, and Grant also held office from 1869 to 1877, but in 1880, when an attempt was made to place

him in the Presidential chair for the third time, it was defeated, and Professor Bryce remarks :

" This precedent has been taken as practically decisive for the future, because General Grant, though his administration had been marked by grave faults, was an exceptionally popular figure. A principle affirmed against him is not likely to be departed from in favour of any aspirant for many elections to come."

Therefore it is all the more remarkable, as this feeling against re-election exists so strongly in the sister Republic, that Diaz should have been so repeatedly brought back to power.

A public letter writer.

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Photo by F. CLARK.]

Señor Ramon Corral, Vice-President of Mexico.

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CHAPTER XIX.

THE LEGISLATURE AND A VICE-PRESIDENT.

THE country would not let Diaz retire from the Presidency.

He realised that a time had come when it would be well for Mexico to have a Vice-President. The institution of this office would tend to relieve him of the constant strain of duties he had already borne for a quarter of a century, and also make it possible for him to pay those visits to the United States and Europe which he had so ardently looked forward to.

Only twice has the President been out of Mexico in all his life, as recorded earlier in these pages, and those two trips put together cover but a few weeks.

Diaz also felt that the election of a President every four years was disturbing to a country. He saw that in the United States of America, no sooner was a man in office and master of his duties than he had to begin working for his next campaign. He realised that four years did not give a President long enough to exercise his talents to his own or his country's advantage, and thus it came about that he suggested a six years' plan.

As soon as it was decided that there was to be a Vice-President, the name of Limantour was at once noised abroad.

He naturally seemed the man for the office because of his high personal standing, his striking success in the management of the Department of Finance, and his wide acquaintance with prominent bankers and financiers in Europe and America.

Señor Limantour has always denied any possibility of being President or Vice-President, assuring his friends that he was a financier and not a politician. However much General Diaz may

have wished him as understudy, the Minister of Finance would neither be bullied nor cajoled into office. Limantour has a wondrous head for figures. He manipulates millions with dexterity and ease, sees *pros* and *cons* of a monetary scheme at once, bnt does not care for the stress and storm of the life of the Chief of State. Limantour being therefore out of the running, General Diaz had to turn his attention to someone else.

Men who are too well known in politics have their enemies as well as their friends. In Mexico there are two distinct parties—both of which bow to the wisdom of the President, but neither of which cared to accept a man from "the other side" as Vice-President.

This was probably the reason that General Diaz looked about for someone among his governors who had ruled his State well, was favourably known for his honesty and integrity, and yet was not well enough known to have political enemies. Added to which he seems to have thought it better that his assistant should not be a military man. Anyway, his choice fell upon Don Ramón Corral. "Who is Corral?" everyone asked outside Mexico.

In June, 1904, the Convention met to name a candidate for the Vice-Presidentship. Congress was crowded to overflowing. Party feeling ran high. The proceedings began by the reading of the list of delegates present. Nearly every seat in the house was occupied, those who attended including persons of prominence, both socially and politically. The gathering was in itself a sufficient answer to those who suggest that Diaz has only to express his will and Congress to submit.

Congress first voted for Limantour, Mariscal, and Mena, in turn; but in the final ballot, after a hotly-waged contest and entire re-arrangement of votes, Corral obtained the required majority on a poll:

Corral (Governor of the State of Sonora)	118
Mariscal (Foreign Minister)	72
Limantour (Minister of Finance).....	5
General Reyes (Ex-Minister of War)	1

Although General Reyes only received one vote at this last

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Governor of the State of Nuevo Leon.

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shuffle in the ballot, he played a very important part in Mexico a few years ago.

Another name likely to be heard of in the future is a nephew of the President, viz., Colonel Felix Diaz. The resemblance of the two men is remarkable. The Colonel is Military Head of the Mexican Police, but was formerly consul-general in Chili. He is a man of strength and ambition.

Don Ramón Corral was born in the city of Alamos, Sonora, January 10th, 1854. He made his appearance in the political world as editor of two newspapers—*El Fantasma* and the *Voz de Alamos*. Both of these publications were opposed to the administration of General Ignacio Pesqueira, who had held the highest official posts of Sonora for twenty years. In 1875 he exchanged the pen for the sword, and when the revolution of August 11th of the same year broke out in the State, with the patriot General Francisco Serna at its head, Corral took an active part, and maintained on the field of battle the same principles that he had proclaimed in the columns of the press.

There is one thing worthy of note: later, when the tomb had been closed on General Pesqueira, Corral wrote a "Historical Review of the State of Sonora," in which he stifled his political passions of other days and did justice to the citizen, who in his later years became the paladin of national independence. If those pages honour the hero of that trying period, the words in which they are penned do honour to the biographer of Pesqueira.

Elected to the legislature and afterwards appointed Secretary of State, Ramón Corral assisted in the elaboration of many of the laws that are to-day in force in his native State, more especially those relating to fiscal regulations.

When Corral was elected delegate to the Federal Congress he defended the agricultural interests of Sonora in the tribune, as well as through the press, by his "Flour Question." The committee of the Treasury had presented a schedule exempting foreign wheat imported into the States of Sinaloa and Lower California from the payment of duties which would have ruined the most important industry of Sonora. Corral charged himself

with demonstrating this by speeches and a series of written articles, which were afterwards condensed in pamphlet form. The committee was convinced, and withdrew its plan.

In the Assembly of 1887 he was elevated by public vote to the Vice-Governorship of Sonora, and he virtually had charge of the executive power during most of the time. His efforts for the establishment of public instruction were incessant, and it is to him, and to him alone, that the State owes its prosperity and its excellent system of public schools. Corral retired from his position in 1891, acted as Secretary of State until 1895, and was then unanimously elected Governor for two terms, filling the position with conspicuous ability.

Among the results of his efforts is the College of Sonora, an important establishment at the capital city of the State, numerous schools, and a multitude of industrial enterprises throughout the State. It may be said without exaggeration that to Corral Sonora owes much, and by his administrative endowments and progressive spirit he has shown himself to be an official who does honour to the Republic of Mexico.

Señor Corral became Governor of the Federal District of Mexico City on December 19th, 1900, and on January 16th, 1903, he was sworn in as Minister of the Interior.

Such was the man chosen by the people as Vice-President of Mexico. I had never seen him, and yet I was about to write a book on the President of a country which he was shortly to help govern.

I confided my distress to General Diaz.

" Why not prolong your stay ? " he asked, " and then it would be easy for you to meet him in the capital."

" No, that is impossible, I must be in England for Christmas."

" Well, well, I will see what can be done," he replied.

May I be forgiven a little personal vanity, for human nature is vain, although it does not care to own a disease in itself which it points at with such ruthless fingers in others.

When I left Mexico for the second time on the dawn of 1905, the wife of the President wrote me a four-page letter in English without a mistake, in which she said :

"Good-bye; we hope to see you soon in England, or Mexico, and be sure that you have true friends here who will always remember you. . . . . My husband telegraphed to Señor Corral to El Paso and to La Colerado, and he will meet you on the road. Hoping you will find your children in perfect health . . . . . and a very happy voyage.

"I am, your sincere friend,

(Signed) "CÁRMEN R. R. DE DIAZ."

A letter like this is only a little thing, but it shows the womanly nature of the wife of the President, evinces her interest not only in others, but in their belongings, emphasises her education to be able to write so well in a foreign tongue, and also shows how General Diaz, busy though he was, had taken the trouble to personally arrange for me to meet his newly-appointed Vice-President, Señor Corral.

Corral may be called upon to play a very important part in Mexican history; and in any case high duties of State have already fallen on his shoulders. By his election he became the second man of importance in Mexico.

It so happened that Señor Corral was absent in the United States during my visit to Mexico, but as I was most anxious to see him—for I had never even heard of him four years before, when he was little known—the President thought out a plan by which we might meet, even if only for a quarter of an hour.

The probable future ruler of the country was travelling south from Texas and El Paso; I was travelling north towards New York. The journey from the frontier to Mexico City takes fifty hours, but by a little planning the meeting-place of the two trains could be arranged, and, thanks to the courtesy of the Mexican Central Railway and Mr. A. A. Robinson, the president of that line, it was done.

We left that quaintest of cities, Zacatecas, which people say resembles Jerusalem so closely, with its square, flat-roofed houses and grey and white adobe walls. Zacatecas is probably the highest inhabited town of any size in the world (as it has 45,000 inhabitants), and stands 8,500 feet above sea level;

although so high it is almost in a plain, for Mexico is a strangely mountainous and volcanic country, as people with weak hearts soon find out.

My train pounded along through vast prairies with mountains on each side as far as the eye could reach, prairies where herds of tens of thousands of cattle and hundreds of bunches of horses (a " bunch " is twenty-four mares and one stallion) roam at will ; where the sand, white as the beach, is interspersed with prickly pears, cactus palm, or crab-apple trees, but where grass is so scarce one wonders that the animals can find food at all.

The dreariness of the prairie is indescribable. It is impossible to realise—unless one has seen it—that there are hundreds and thousands of square miles of land in the southern States of America and northern States of Mexico where nothing grows. Miles of sand, oceans of dust, rarely a hill or even an incline, dried-up, parched, rank grass with a prickly pear at intervals ; the loneliness, the desolation and want of life are beyond pen or pencil to depict. For days and days the train pounds through such waste. For days and days in Sonora, Texas, New Mexico, Arizona or Arkansas, the eye wearies with the grey monotony. An occasional whitened skeleton by the roadside denotes the fact that a horse, or a cow, perished of hunger or thirst at that spot, and that its flesh was torn from the bones by some prairie wolves (coyote), whose midnight howl is so weird, wild, and distressing that it can only be likened to the uncanniness of the prairie itself.

Irrigation has done much, but will irrigation ever redeem all that dried-up desert waste ? The land seems too poor for anything to grow, although when the tropical rains fall flowers spring forth in wondrous-wise for a few weeks, and the cattle nibble fresh green grass.

The worst possible opinion of Mexico is gathered from the north, which is simply an arid plain, a land of desolation, like Texas or Arizona. Therefore, it is sad that many tourists only go as far as Mexico City, and never see the real wealth of Southern Mexico, never penetrate east or west to gauge its possibilities. That brilliant writer Prof. Bryce unfortunately seems to have

formed an impression of wilderness and poverty from his remarks on Mexico in his great book on the American Commonwealth.

Telegrams had been sent along the line to arrange this strange, unwonted meeting between Corral and myself. If the trains did not come in time to pass one another at La Colorado, then they were to be "held up" for a quarter of an hour wherever they did pass.

No one was to know of this meeting until it actually took place, for Señor Corral was coming to the capital officially to take his Chair of Office, and was being met at all the bigger stations *en route* by soldiers, bands, and great enthusiasm. Thus it was General Diaz had said:

"It is no good your meeting him at a station, surrounded by hundreds of people, so I will arrange some quiet place where you can actually make each other's acquaintance."

It was a funny idea for the two most important mail trains of the day to be "held up" miles from anywhere, so that two people might meet one another and then speed away north and south, perhaps never to meet again—who knows?

The guards and darkie porters were most excited. The Vice-President was a stranger to them, and they were as keen to see him as I was myself.

I put on my hat, tried to feel tidy after a journey of two days and two nights—and waited.

We reached La Colorado "on time," not bad after a seven hundred mile run on a journey of twelve hundred and twenty-five miles to the frontier; but the train from the north was a little late, so it was wired. Accordingly, it was arranged that we should wait for the appointed interview at the next passing point on the prairie, for single railway tracks are the rule on that vast continent almost everywhere west of St. Louis or Chicago.

It was hardly a romantic spot for a meeting. Not a habitation of any sort or kind, for La Luz is merely a place for passing or for shunting a freight train. Almost at the same moment the two engines' whistles sounded, and we steamed in together.

The Presidential saloon stopped immediately opposite my carriage, and all the darkie porters and Pullman conductors

jumped down from both trains, heads popped out of windows, and enquiries rent the air from endless voices.

"What is it? Anything wrong?" was asked along the cars.

Before I could step to the ground, Señor Ramón Corral, Vice-President of Mexico, had jumped down and was walking forward to meet me.

"Mrs. Alec Tweedie, I suppose—I have had two telegrams from the President, and am so glad to meet you. Come into my car; we can talk more quietly there," he added, as he handed me up those steep steps.

"I saw by the papers you were in Mexico, writing another book," he continued in excellent English.

"Yes, and now I must add something about Mexico's first Vice-President, but our time is so limited. Have you any little pamphlet or history of yourself which would help me?"

"No, I have had no history," he laughed. "First a miner, then a journalist, and there has been nothing to write about me—yet."

"History in the making," I retorted.

"The real history of Mexico and strife is over," he replied; "General Diaz has finished all that, the history to come will only be of peace, success, and wealth, I hope. Not only has our President made modern Mexico, but he knows more about the land than any living man."

I was glad to hear him say that, for it always appeared to me that Diaz knew more than anyone about everything connected with his country. Corral spoke with the greatest enthusiasm of his chief, repeating his own desire to become a good second, and relieve Diaz a little of the immense weight of affairs he was carrying on his shoulders. Indeed, it was delightful to hear his admiration for his President, and see the earnest desire to be of use to him and his country.

"Have you been much in Europe?" I asked.

"Not much, but General Diaz sent me to Germany to study postal matters when he wanted to make some alteration in our postal service, and I went to the Paris Exhibition in 1900, so I know Europe a little, and would like to see more European

capital invested in Mexico. There have been enormous investments in this country these past few years. We always welcome foreign capitalists, and the benefit is generally mutual," he laughed.

Then he spoke charmingly of President Roosevelt's kindness during his trip to St. Louis, from which he was then returning, and the conversation drifted into more personal matters.

" Time's up " came the unwelcome call from the conductors standing on the prairie, for platform there was none. " That is, if you are ready," one of them added politely, but I could see watches in both their hands as I peeped from the window.

It is a strange fact that all the porters, conductors, engine-drivers, in fact, everyone in a position of trust on railways in Mexico is English-speaking. The Mexican Indians have not yet learnt to fill such responsible posts.

Señor Corral insisted on helping me down, and walking the few steps back to my own car, when with a friendly handshake he turned and flew, for steam was up, whistles going, and in a second both trains were on their respective journeys north and south.

What was the impression left ?

A man of medium height, with swarthy skin, greyish white hair, and dark penetrating eyes, with something of the same merry look as the man under whom he is to serve. A man of physical force, well-built and thickly-set, affable in manner, cheerful in countenance, he has yet a certain air of authority, and one could easily imagine him in a position of command. There is considerable determination in the face, which is rather lined for a man of fifty. In fact, Corral at fifty appears as old as General Diaz at seventy-five.

He looks the sort of man who would be a warm friend or a bitter enemy, a man of strong emotion and warmth of heart, a man easily beloved, and kindly in his acts—characteristics more prominent on the surface, perhaps, than great strength of character.

In short, an attractive personality.

And so into the distance faded the train bearing the first Vice-

President of Mexico, the chosen second of the Nationalist party, to take up his duties for the first time in the capital. It would be interesting to lift the curtain ten years ahead and see what has happened to Mexico and her rulers.

As I sat pondering over my interview with a man of whom so much is expected, and as yet so little is known, a marvellous effect appeared on the prairie. It was midwinter, and the sun set about five o'clock. The effect lasted only for a few minutes, for twilight there is none.

We had neared the mountains round Camacho when the heavens assumed the most gorgeous hues, while just below the purple of the hills a vast flaming lake appeared. The foreground of prairie disappeared into hazy opalescent reds and yellows. A gauzy haze floating over a vast sheet of water. Behind rose those rugged hills the last of the spurs of the Rocky Mountains chain, and above that glorious fiery sky. I did not remember such a vast field of water existing at that part, and neither did it. It was a mirage, and the cattle that stampeded away from the train could not quench their thirst within its basin. But these old prairie cattle are wiser than the *gringos* (foreigners), know exactly where to find real water, and do not tramp off to encounter disappointment in a mirage.

In summer the cattle require to go every day to water; but in the cooler weather they do not drink for two or three days at a time; especially if they get prickly pear, a form of cactus which is the salvation of prairie cattle in times of drought. It is very juicy, being eighty-seven per cent. water.

To encourage the cattle to eat sufficient prickly pear to live on in times of drought, the ranchmen cut it off the stem, make a fire, and burn off the worst of the prickles, which they do by holding the leaves over the flames for a moment. The animals eat the cactus, including all the prickles and thorns—they are real prickles and thorns—and sometimes their mouths get so full of them that when they are killed it seems wonderful they could have managed to exist under the circumstances, for the back of the tongue looks like a cushion stuck full of pins. The wildest animals will follow anyone about in the tamest manner

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Horses on the prairie.

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Mules on the prairie.

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Photo by The AUTHOR.]

Six men to one calf !

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

The loneliness of the prairie : a Caporal.

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to obtain the specially-prepared prickly pear delicacy, which often goes far to save their lives. A train of Mexican carriers, who travel about with perhaps forty carts of goods and half-a-dozen oxen yoked to each cart, feed their animals entirely on these shrubs. The species abounds, and good jelly is made from the fruit. The flower, too, is pretty.

The real wild cattle, which still exist in parts of Mexico, especially in these districts, are weedy and small, with enormous horns. They live on the prickly pear and grass, never seek water like the ranch cattle, and never drink at all except when it rains and they find a puddle. They are fast dying out; indeed, ranch owners shoot them whenever they get a chance. Sometimes the cowboys rope, and neck or yoke a wild beast with a gentle one, hoping to tame the monarch of the hills, but as a rule this does not answer, the wild animal generally dying of a broken heart. He simply lies down, sulks, kicks, and dies. It is found better to kill them at once, for otherwise they cause great trouble.

Darker and darker grew the purples, more hazy and indistinct the golds and reds, and then, as if a veil passed over the sky, mirage and mountains disappeared into the mysterious shades of night.

Oh, the poverty of the Mexican Indian as sometimes seen from the train. For instance, look at that village. The houses are made of sun-dried bricks without straw, known as *adobe*. They have flat roofs, no chimneys and no windows. The open door admits all the light and ventilation that is necessary in the day-time, and when closed keeps the place warm at night. These folk are too poor to afford much oil, and they go to bed when it is dark and get up when it is light.

Law necessitates the Indians being clothed. The poorer ones do not even wear sandals, although the richer natives do, and are proud of them. A man has four garments, a shirt, a pair of white linen trousers, a large flannel blanket *sarape* which he wears when it is cold and rolls himself up in at night, and his huge felt or straw sombrero.

Corral comes from that vast district of Northern Mexico known as Sonora, through which I was steaming, now well known for

its mines and cattle ranches, but formerly the home of famous Indian cave-dwellers and the wild Apache tribes.

Alas! The Indian languages and customs are dying out. The native devil dances, the skeleton weddings and the weird music, are gradually disappearing, although superstition is dying hard, for it is part and parcel of the people.

Those people of the North who lived in caves knew nothing of masonry, and yet the people of the South were magnificent workers in stone. No finer examples of early stone ornamentation exist than the Zapotec Temples at Mitla, or the Aztec-Toltec Fortress at Xochicalco.

Mexico possesses every kind of climate, for it is nearly two thousand miles from north to south. Almost every flower, fruit, and vegetable known to man may be found within its boundaries, and practically every mineral this world produces has been discovered in the Republic.

Half a century ago there was probably no spot on earth more corrupt than Mexico. Corruption was born in the blood; the love of gambling, coquetting with chance, was inherent.

The Senate was corrupt, politics were even more so than in the United States. Presidents were constantly changing, each with his own friends and his own interests; but they could not all together do as much as the one President who has retained his seat for twenty-six years.

Gradually, and only gradually, has the influence of General Diaz been felt. He refused to be bribed, he discharged anyone beneath him who allowed backsheesh; so to-day (1905) in spite of all the great schemes afloat, for harbours, mines, manufactories or public buildings, bribery is almost unknown.

If political morality in the United States is at a low ebb, as many assert, the honesty of the American public itself is on a high plane.

In Mexico things are reversed. The politician is beyond bribery and corruption; the peon gladly accedes to both, and is at heart a thief withal.

That America, a great and wonderful country, should allow statesmen to condescend to trickery is remarkable, and should

Pitch pine dealer (poverty).

Photo by The AUTHOR.]

A village church. Silver altar and rails (wealth).

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The cutlery market.

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be easily cured, for they are educated men, although peeping into the Senate, where wealth has bought its seats, one soon finds that the education of American politicians is not always of a high standard. On the other hand, the peon is an Indian, or a half-bred with little education or moral strength, and such material is more difficult to train.

Trade indications in Mexico are all good; railway traffic shows improvement, and there is a generally hopeful feeling. There is bread and work for all industrious people. Idlers and the shriftless, the constitutionally incapable, must suffer as they always do, even in times of prosperity; but everywhere the public schools and the increasing body of trained teachers are doing their work in preparing the rising generation to take its place among the hosts of industry. There are more young Mexicans acquiring technical knowledge than ever before; there is a growing pride in honest work. There being a perfect condition of political tranquillity, the mind of the nation is bent upon the things that are vital to the general prosperity.

Mexico can well afford to leave politics alone; it had decades of political unrest and disturbance. Now the best brains of the country are busy with practical things, finding out how to make money and win assured comfort. The weak and indolent are being relegated to the rear, and the thoughtful and planning section of the people is winning its way in the world. The middle class, which is a producing and a consuming class, is growing rapidly.

On December 1st, 1904, General Diaz took the oath as President for the seventh time. That is a record for any man to be proud of, and must he not have felt pleased as he remembered the bankrupt state of Mexico when he first stepped into office, and her financial success to-day when her Government Bonds are above par.

What a different scene was the day in 1876, when he first took the oath in grave anxiety but buoyed up with hope, to what it was in 1904, when peace and prosperity reigned on every side.

At ten o'clock in the morning, the nation's idol and hero became the President for the seventh time, and on this occasion

for a term of six years, and with a Vice-President to aid him. Those who had formerly fought against him voted for him that day. Moderate Republicans, Radicals, Clericals, and former Imperialists, all were ready to be guided by the master mind of this democratic leader.

The ceremony took place at the Chamber of Deputies, Alfredo Chavero, Speaker of the House, receiving the oath.

The night before, the following military orders were issued :

" Inasmuch as, to-morrow, in the Chamber of Deputies, the oath of office will be taken by the President and Vice-President of the Republic, who have been elected for the term of six years, which will terminate on November 30, 1910, the military commandant, acting under instructions from the Department of War and Marine, is pleased to order that the regiment of Zapadores and the third, tenth and twenty-fourth infantry regiments be drawn up at 9.30 a.m., from the portico of the Chamber to the door of honour of the National Palace, forming a double line along the following streets : Factor, Vergara, San Francisco, Plateros, Portal de Mercaderes, and in front of the City Hall.

" The said forces will be subject to the immediate orders of Brigadier-General Telesforo Merodio, whose staff will consist of Major Melchor Rodriguez and Lieutenants Ignacio Gamiochipi and Enrique Gómez. The Gendarmes del Ejercito will furnish an escort.

" The regiment of Zapadores will provide a guard of honour with flag and band, composed of forty men, commanded by a first captain : the said guard to station itself at the entrance of Congress and to incorporate itself with its regiment when the supreme magistrate withdraws.

" The troops on duty at the Ciudadela will fire a salute of twenty-one guns at the time of the taking of the oath of office. When the salute is fired the flag will be hoisted on all barracks and military edifices and will be hauled down when the salute is at an end.

" At 3.30 the superior officers and officers of the army will assemble in the Department of War and Marine, in order to proceed in a body to congratulate the President of the Republic."

The city was in gala attire, throngs of people cheered on every

side. The military were in force, the salute was fired, and everything denoted a great festival.

The streets along the route which the President was to traverse in an open carriage to the Chamber to take the oath presented a scene of animation. The pavements were packed with people, and the balconies and windows could not have contained a larger number of spectators.

In the meantime not only members of both Houses of Congress, but the representatives of foreign and friendly Powers, nearly all in uniform, and many ladies and gentlemen of the best classes of society were arriving at the Chamber.

Madame Cármen Romero Rubio de Diaz, wife of the President of the Republic, arrived in her carriage with her sister, Señora Maria Luisa Romero Rubio de Teresa, Señora Amada Diaz de la Torre, and Señora Luisa Raigosa de Diaz, wife of Captain Porfirio Diaz. Don Manuel Cuesta Gallardo gave his arm to Madame Diaz and escorted her and her party to the box reserved for them.

Señora Amparo Escalante de Corral, wife of Vice-President Corral, a handsome woman, also came to see her distinguished husband take the oath of office.

The diplomatists were received by Don Luis Torres Rivas, Introducer of Ambassadors, in full dress uniform, glittering with decorations.

The box apportioned to the Corps Diplomatique presented a brilliant appearance with its array of bright-hued uniforms, ribbons and decorations, ranging from the gorgeously embroidered Oriental silks of the Chinese Chargé d'Affaires and Attaché to the heraldic blazonry of European monarchies, maintaining all the trappings and picturesque accoutrements of mediæval chivalry.

In the box were General Clayton, American Ambassador, in his military uniform, and Messrs. McCreery and Hoefele, first and third secretaries of the Embassy; Monsieur Camille Blondel, French Minister, whose array of decorations was particularly imposing, and who was accompanied by the Vicomte de la Tour, Secretary of the Legation; the Marquis de Prat,

Minister of Spain, whose brilliant attire was shown off by the white *capa* of a *maestro de ronda;* Viscount Beughen, Belgian Minister, in handsome and sober diplomatic uniform; Colonel Francisco Orla, in the uniform of an officer of the army of Guatemala, which country he represents; General García Velez, Minister from Cuba, in civilian attire; Cavaliere Aldo Nobili, Italian Minister, in diplomatic uniform; M. Gregoire de Wollant, Russian Chargé d'Affaires, in uniform; Liang Hsun, Chinese Chargé d'Affaires and Fong Ying Kai, Attaché of the Chinese Legation, both of whom wore their native attire, with plumed caps; Mr. Clarence Key, Foreign Secretary of the Chinese Legation; Señor Vega, Chargé d'Affaires of Chili; Herr Geza von Gaspardy, Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires, who wore the picturesque plum-coloured velvet uniform, fur-trimmed pelisse, and plumed shako of a Hungarian cavalry officer, and Count Charles Kielmansegg, Secretary of the Austrian Legation, wearing the brilliant uniform of a lieutenant of the Duke of Lorraine's dragoons.

At ten o'clock the open carriages bearing the official party started from the National Palace. They were headed by a detachment of the Blue Horse Guards, commanded by Lieutenant Manuel Blazquez.

The first of the long line of carriages were occupied by the State Governors and the Delegations of the Legislature and Judiciary.

Last of all came the Presidential carriage, occupied by the Supreme Magistrate and Don Gabrial Mancera. General Diaz wore civilian attire, being in plain evening dress, with the tricolor band crossing his breast.

Immediately behind the Presidential carriage rode the following officers of the President's staff in handsome full-dress uniform, gorgeous with gold aiguillettes, and all well mounted; Captain Porfirio Diaz, junior, Captain Agustín del Rio, Captain Enrique Hurtado and Captain Armando I. Santacruz. The rear of the procession was brought up by another detachment of the Guards under Captain Gustavo A. Salas.

All along the route the President and Vice-President-Elect were the recipients of a continued ovation.

The ceremony of taking the oath of office was very brief and simple.

When the President and the Vice-President-Elect entered the House, all the members and the occupants of the boxes rose; cheers and clapping of hands came from all parts of the hall.

Señor Alfredo Chavero, the Speaker of the House, occupied a scarlet and gold chair on the raised daïs in the rear of the Chamber, for he was the most important person of the moment, the old President being no more and the new one not yet sworn in.

Whilst all the members of both Chambers present stood, Señor Chavero, as representative of Congress, remained seated.

Majestically General Diaz mounted the daïs and advanced to another gold and scarlet chair placed beside that of the Speaker. That other chair, however, the President did not occupy, but standing in front of Señor Chavero, and after shaking hands with him, he repeated in clear, ringing tones the customary formula of the oath, promising to discharge well and faithfully the duties of the office of President to which he had been elected, to consider always the welfare of the nation, and to observe and to cause to be observed the Constitution and Laws of Reform.

Señor Chavero then said, still sitting while the President and every one else remained standing: "If so you do, may the nation reward you; and if so you shall not do, may she call you to account."

The President's declaration was received with a renewed outburst of applause.

Then Don Ramón Corral made an analogous declaration, suited to the office of Vice-President, and the formula repeated by Señor Chavero was the same. Señor Corral's declaration was also greeted with applause.

This brought the ceremony to a close, and the President and Vice-President retired from the Hall amidst loud acclamations.

General Diaz repaired to the reception room of the Chamber, where he spent some moments in pleasant conversation with Benito Juárez, son of the illustrious Reform President of whom we have heard so much in this volume; General Mancera, Manuel Cervantes and Enrique Landa.

A group of natives of General Diaz' own State repaired to the Palace to congratulate him. Señor Miguel Bolaños Cacho, one of the justices of the Supreme Court, and himself a native of Oaxaca, acted as spokesman. He referred to the general congratulations, and then went on to say :

" But we citizens of Oaxaca are able to say to you something more. We can affirm that we are glad to have first seen the light of day in the same region as that in which the ancestors of so illustrious a citizen as yourself made their homes, in the very *terreno* in which your cradle was rocked. We can declare that we are proud of the brilliant renown which you have shed on that soil. We come once more to assure you that we are your followers, and that we take comfort in the thought that our sons and our sons' sons of Oaxacan birth will be entitled to claim for themselves the foremost positions in moments of danger, seeing that they will have the solemn obligation of imitating the example and honouring the memory of their great men ; Antonio Leon, the hero of Molino del Rey ; Benito Juárez, the hero of the Reform and the war against the so-called Empire ; and you who, by half a century of patriotic labour, have identified yourself with the glorious life of the Republic."

President Diaz, in acknowledging this address, was deeply moved, and said that the words of friends from his own native State stirred him like the long-lost but well-remembered voice of a parent.

Diaz, as these pages have indicated, showed no particular characteristics to lead to prominence in civil life until he was a man over forty. A good soldier, true as steel, brave, hardy, capable in every way, but nothing more. He was merely a fighting man ; indeed, it was not until after he was actually President, when nearing fifty, that his gifts for government asserted themselves. Such late developments are rare, although, to take our own country, Cromwell was forty before he made any mark. Up to that time he was a quiet, obscure country person, who had made a few dull speeches in Parliament. Or again, Chatham. Chatham was fifty before he was heard of outside his own circle, and yet a few years, barely months, later

the world was at his feet. Some people develop late, others mature young. Strong character always asserts itself whenever opportunity offers.

The capacity for seizing opportunity is worth more in the long run than wealth, beauty, or brains.

It is rather the cry nowadays to say that men's best work is done before the age of forty, and all good work accomplished by sixty, but among endless exceptions General Diaz must be cited.

His life's work really began at forty-six. Up to that time he had been an officer in a somewhat disorganised army, and his ambition, at the outset, as we know in an early chapter, never soared beyond attaining the rank of a colonel.

He was nearing fifty when he entered Mexico City at the head of the Revolutionary Army. Then it was that his greatest achievements began. Romance and adventure were behind him, although personal peril still surrounded him. He had to forget he was a soldier, and be born again as a leader, a politician, a maker and not a destroyer, though no doubt the experience of public affairs, which he gained in a smaller way in those early years spent in Oaxaca, served him to good purpose when he became head of the Republic.

At sixty, instead of being intellectually played out, he was only on the high road to his best, which he reached about ten years later. At seventy-five he has every faculty, every power, and all quickened by the experience of three-fourths of a century. This is remarkable for a man of his age, and even more remarkable for one of his race, born in a semi-tropical land.

From the foregoing pages it will have been seen that Diaz began life with nothing in his favour and everything against him. He was of humble birth. His education was indifferent. He read few books, and knew little of the history of nations or of international politics, for there were no public libraries, no newspapers, no trains in that little out-of-the-way tropical town of Oaxaca, and therefore Nature had been practically his only master. She had quickened his power of observation, just as poverty had taught him self-denial and thoughtfulness.

No ruler of a nation ever began in humbler surroundings, or was fostered in a more unlikely nest from which to fly to such exalted heights.

From the lowest, upwards to the highest rung this man climbed; and not only that—for that would be but personal attainment—he has taken his country upwards with him. He shared her misfortunes, and she is now reaping the reward of his labours.

Who can say he is not the greatest man of the age, or does not deserve a niche amongst the greatest men of all ages and all climes?

Yet when Diaz talks one would think he had never achieved anything. He never uses the first pronoun singular, always speaking as "we," but not the "we" with a capital W habitual to Royalty; just simply *we*, meaning others in preference to himself. That is why it has been so difficult to draw his picture, to show the modesty lying behind his giant strength.

What have been the results of President Diaz' long administration? That terrible poverty which sapped the life's blood from the country during three-fourths of last century has turned to affluence. Peace is the outcome of Revolution. The land, jibed and jeered at abroad, now holds a position among the leading nations. Lawlessness has given place to wise jurisdiction. The Mexicans are better governed, they can afford to pay the taxes imposed for the benefits they receive, and are yet more wealthy. Instead of money pouring out to repay old debts, foreign capital is pouring into the country, so secure has Mexican credit become in the world's markets. Manufactures are building up new sources of internal revenue, and agriculture, particularly the growth of tropical products, is so admirably encouraged by the State, that agriculture alone must ensure the nation's prosperity, even should mining be destined at some future day to fail.

These are the material results. More important still in the life of a nation, Diaz has taught the Mexicans the benefit of lasting peace, and has set before them an ideal of honest public life consistently maintained, which has made a return to the

old corrupt traditions almost impossible. Diaz some day will die, but his example and his system will survive him.

A youthful veteran is the President, and this is all the more remarkable when one remembers that hunger was not unknown to him in the early days, that for the first twenty-five years of his life he struggled against great odds, that for the next twenty-five he was helping to make history in one of the wildest countries of God's earth, and that only this last quarter of a century has he left camp life and strife behind, and devoted himself to figures and a desk, to politics and diplomacy ; only lately has he thrown aside the soldier's cloak, and taken to the frock coat and tall hat of civilisation.

The man has changed as much as his circumstances ; those who knew him when he was young declare that it is almost impossible to believe he is the same flesh and blood. The rough voice and manner of the soldier have mellowed in tone and softened in gesture.

Even his physiognomy has become more refined, more gentle, more haughty it may be ; only during these last few years has the courtier outstripped the commander. It is a remarkable instance of self-evolution, a change not only of character, but of features which can be seen by comparing different portraits.

Diaz has been above all a patriot, whether old or young.

Mexico is always uppermost in the mind of its President. When an engineering friend of mine was leaving Mexico after many years' residence in that land, he asked General Diaz, as he said good-bye, if there was anything he could do for him in Europe.

"Yes," he replied, shaking him warmly by the hand, "speak well of my country."

And so must come to a close the story of the career of this wonderful man. A battle roll of some fifty engagements lies behind him—twice seriously wounded, often slightly hurt, three times a prisoner, marvellous and daring escapes achieved ; then a Presidency lasting for thirty years (less four years spent out of office), a Presidency famous for its political rule,

industrial development, general diplomacy and advance in education.

Peace as firmly established as war was formerly universal, filled coffers and prosperity instead of debt and debauchery.

Thus, at the close of 1905, we must take leave of the greatest ruler of modern times in the full power of all his faculties and strength in his seventy-sixth year.

APPENDIX.

As has been mentioned in the earlier pages of this book, the history of President Diaz' long administration lasting over a quarter of a century has been that of the commercial and industrial development of Mexico. The days of battles, "plans," and "pronunciamentos" came to an end when he was established in the Presidential chair. It is impossible to fully realise how great his constructive work has been except one can get an impression of the prosperous condition of Mexico to-day, compared with what the country was when he first rose to the head of affairs, and impossible to give that impression without calling in the aid of statistical matter and trade returns.

On the other hand, as this volume progressed I felt strongly the danger of burying the personality of the man beneath the weight and detail of his work. The best way out of the dilemma seemed to be to give this matter in an appendix, and the following pages will, I trust, prove useful.

First, a few words about silver, which affects everything. Since I was in Mexico on the dawn of 1905, a new Currency Law has been promulgated which has caused a revolution in the finance of the country. It came into force on May 1st, 1905, and has already proved of enormous advantage in Mexican investments. One day I asked Señor José Limantour, the Minister of Finance, to explain to me the new measure, which had just been presented to Congress, and he most kindly did so.

"Coming to Mexico by way of the United States," he said, "you doubtless had occasion to exchange your American money into Mexican coinage, and you observed that for each American dollar you received as much as two dollars fifteen cents, sometimes even more, in Mexican money. Again, on returning to the United States and changing your Mexican coins into American money, you will find that you only get forty-six or forty-seven cents in American money for each Mexican dollar. This practically illustrates the effect of the depreciation of silver. Before silver began to decline in gold value, the Mexican

dollar was not only equal to the American dollar, but was at a small premium above it in value. The Mexican dollar, in fact, still contains more silver than the American silver dollar, and yet to get one American dollar one has to pay more than two Mexican dollars. The reason for this is that the American dollar is convertible into gold, or, at any rate the United States Government guarantees its ultimate convertibility into gold, whereas the Mexican dollar is worth no more than the silver which it contains.

"For thirty years the gold value of silver has been declining.

"There was a time, before silver fell from its high estate, when five Mexican dollars were equivalent to £1 (one pound sterling). At present five Mexican dollars are worth only ten shillings, and even less, so that to get one pound sterling one has to give not five dollars as formerly, but over ten dollars in Mexican currency.

"But this is not the worst feature of Mexico's silver currency, for silver has not only depreciated in terms of gold, but is constantly fluctuating. Consequently, Mexico's currency fluctuates from day to day as measured in gold.

"It is not necessary to remark how trade and national interests are prejudiced by these fluctuations. If a currency serves the purpose of a little rod whereby the value of all other things is measured, it is presupposed that that little rod must always be of the same length, otherwise its acceptability as a measure is obviously impaired. Now the "little rod" we use in Mexico for currency *does* vary in length from day to day, and what is more, one can never foresee either the direction or extent of its variations.

"By way of showing the fluctuation of the silver dollar I may tell you that its value in 1890 was 91 cents (U.S.A.), while twelve years later it had dropped to 37 cents, or little more than one-third of its former value.

"The remedy is fully explained in the Bill now before Congress and in the *exposé de motifs* which accompanies it. In effect, it consists in suppressing what is known as the free coinage of silver, or, in other words, the right of any one possessing silver bullion of the requisite fineness to present it at the mint and have it converted into coined dollars on demand. When this Bill is passed that will cease to be possible. Government will then have control of the mintage and the issue of coined money, and the supply of dollars will be limited and adjusted strictly to the needs of the market; the value of the dollar will rise and the fluctuations of exchange will be kept within very narrow limits. In other words, the value of the Mexican dollar for exchange purposes will be made stable.

"Of course, the measure does not aim at redressing the great depreciation of silver—that would be an impossibility. On the contrary, the depreciation of silver is an accepted fact, but in spite of this, Mexican currency will be raised above its bullion value, and, above all, will be made independent of the daily fluctuations of the value of silver.

"Under the new arrangement the Mexican dollar will have a fixed value, about equivalent to the American half-dollar, and ten Mexican dollars, more or less, will be equal to £1 (one pound sterling)."

Broadly speaking the new Currency Law gives Mexico the 50-cent dollar. It declares that the theoretical unit of the monetary system of the United Mexican States is represented by seventy-five centigrammes of pure gold, and that the silver *peso*, or dollar, which has hitherto been coined with a weight of 24·4386 grammes of pure silver, will have a legal value equivalent to seventy-five centigrammes of pure gold.

The coins henceforward to be struck are as follows:—

Gold—Ten pesos; five pesos.
Silver—One peso, fifty cents, twenty cents, ten cents.
Nickel—Five cents.
Bronze—Two cents, one cent.

The *peso*, the national coin, has a curious origin. Mexico was conquered by Cortéz in 1519, and until 1535 the current coins circulating were sent over from Spain. But as the supply often fell short holders of silver broke up the coins into pieces, called *peso* (weight), the name still in use to-day. Frauds ensued, and accordingly, by Royal Letters Patent, the first mint of Mexico was built in 1535. For many years the mint was leased, but in 1895 it became national property, and it is an institution of which Mexico may justly be proud.

Advantage has been taken of the issue of a new monetary law to rid Mexico's currency of some minor but not unimportant blemishes and anomalies. The chief of these related to the subsidiary coins. Under the former system the silver 50-cent, 20-cent, 10-cent and 5-cent pieces were of the same fineness as the dollar, viz., 0·90277, and of proportional weight, so that in consequence they were unlimited legal tender.

This was all wrong. Destined as the subsidiary coins are to facilitate the small transactions of daily life, their legal-tender capacity ought to be limited, and the value of the metal which they contain

ought to be less than their value as coins. Otherwise they are liable to be exported, causing a scarcity of small change. These desiderata have been kept in view in the new system. The fineness of the subsidiary silver coins is to be $\frac{800}{1000}$ only, and their legal-tender capacity is limited to $20 in a single payment. Of course, the gold coins and the silver *peso* are unlimited legal tender. The silver 5-cent piece is abolished and is replaced by a nickel coin of the same value, which is destined to be a serviceable and popular coin.

At the time when the enabling Act was passed the creation of a reserve or exchange fund was left to the discretion of the Executive, and the opinion seemed to prevail that it would not be established at once. This view, however, proved erroneous, as the creation of the fund synchronised with the promulgation of the new currency measure. Ten million *pesos* from the treasury reserves constitute the foundation of the fund, which will gradually be increased from other sources, chiefly the seigniorage and other profits of coinage.

Bankers and financial authorities in general are glad that the exchange fund has been made an initial feature of the plan of currency reform, for it will give an immediate character of stability and permanence and obviate the drawbacks incidental to the enhancement of the monetary circulation through the single influence of scarcity value, drawbacks that were for a time severely felt in India as the result of the currency measures of 1893.

The exchange fund is handled by a Special Commission, of which the President ex-officio is the Minister of Finance, and which, in addition, has a membership of nine persons. Two of these nine are ex-officio members, viz., the Treasurer-General of the Nation and the Director of the Mint. Three members are appointed by the three chief banks of the capital, and the remaining four are appointed by the Executive. It is an illustration of the broad spirit in which public affairs are now conducted in Mexico that five of the nine members, including two of the four appointed by the Government, are foreigners. The commission performs the functions of a general board of currency control.

Allied with the currency reforms are enactments designed to afford relief and offset the loss to the silver mining industry incidental to the suspension of the free coinage of silver, facilities being afforded to holders of bullion for disposing of the same on the best possible terms and without delay.

Is it likely that Mexico will offer an increasing field for trade with foreign countries, and a secure and profitable outlet for foreign capital ?

Mixed up with this question is another which not infrequently is

interposed. It is admitted that Mexico is a rich and growing country, but it is also said that it is a one man country, and that when President Diaz has ceased to control affairs it will, or may, go to pieces again.

This is not, I am convinced, the correct view. One of the chief signs of ability in the rule of President Diaz is that he has known how to surround himself with good men to assist him in the government of the country. One man, however able, cannot do everything, and it is happy for him if he possess the gift of selecting the right men to work under him. This the President has done, with the result that the country has been well managed for many years, and every one in Mexico has had an object lesson which has shown him that his own prosperity exists, and can only exist, under a strong and upright government. Mexico has attained the habit of pure and patriotic administration, and she cannot readily lose that habit.

Again, the idea is firmly fixed in the minds of Mexicans that the United States will not allow any disturbance to take place in a country whose frontier forms her own southern boundaries. This belief that anything in the nature of civil turmoil will only be playing into the hand of the United States acts as a great deterrent against any ebullition of unruly spirits.

Let us now take a rapid glance at the condition of things in 1876, when Diaz first assumed power, and to-day; in other words, let us see how the country has profited by the thirty years of peace which it has enjoyed.

For the figures contained in the following pages of this Appendix I am largely indebted to Mr. Lucien Jerome, the able British Consul in Mexico City, who is always anxious to bring openings for trade under the notice of his countrymen.

In 1876 the population was 9,300,000; to-day it is estimated at nearly twenty millions.

In 1876 there were 567 kilometres of railway constructed; to-day there are 16,285 kilometres.

The combined value of exports and imports in 1876 was $65,000,000 silver. During the year 1903 it had increased to $400,000,000 in Mexican silver.

The imports for the fiscal year of 1874–5 amounted to $18,793,493.61 in gold, whilst for the fiscal year of 1902–3, they amounted to $75,904,807.58 gold.

The exports for the fiscal year of 1874–5 amounted to $27,318,788.10 silver, whilst for the fiscal year of 1902–3 they were $207,377,793.17 silver.

Neither the depreciation of the white metal, which has raised the price of foreign merchandise in silver to two or three times what it was when exchange was at par, nor the development of national manufactures, which throw on the market an immense volume of goods that compete in quality and price with similar imported goods, have been able to reduce the volume of the imports; on the contrary, they have increased in volume year by year, showing that there is enlarged consumption, and consequently greater purchasing capacity. There can be no better evidence of the gradual improvement in the general welfare of the country.

The public revenues increased from $19,088,158 in the fiscal year 1877–8, to $81,061,078 for the fiscal year 1904–5.

In 1876 Mexico had debt, but no credit. To-day its credit is entirely rehabilitated, and at the close of the fiscal year 1903–4 the public debt of Mexico, upon which interest has been punctually paid, was as follows :—

	1903-4
Gold Debt	£28,084,808
Silver Debt	14,478,552
Floating Debt	129,188
	£42,692,548

In the same way through these comparative statistics improvement is shown in all branches, and in addition to this, very large sums of money have been spent on sanitation and public improvements of various kinds. For instance, about £2,500,000 has been expended in constructing an excellent harbour at Vera Cruz, and over £6,000,000 has already been spent on the National Railway on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and its two harbours of Salina Cruz and Coatzacoalcos, on the Pacific Ocean and Mexican Gulf respectively, by which an enormous inter-ocean freight traffic is likely to be carried.

One of the most important undertakings in Mexico, begun by General Diaz about twenty years ago, is now completed and is to be publicly opened for traffic in the autumn of 1906. This is the Tehuantepec Railway.

The Isthmus of Tehuantepec is one of the narrowest strips of land between the Atlantic and Pacific. It is about a thousand miles further north than the projected Panama Canal, which, in all probability, will not be finished before 1920. Therefore, for the next

fifteen years Tehuantepec will have the bulk of the transport trade across the continent from ocean to ocean. I travelled over this route with Mexican Ministers, engineers, and the contractor, Sir Weetman Pearson, and know what enormous difficulties have had to be surmounted, and what a wonderful engineering scheme this really is. The railway itself is under two hundred miles in length, but the harbours at either end (Coatzacoalcos on the Atlantic and Salina Cruz on the Pacific) are so enormous and so deep they are capable of holding the biggest ships afloat.

The quays and warehouses are arranged so that ships can load or unload at the same time, while huge cranes quickly convey the cargoes from boat to rail or warehouse, and back again to the ship. These harbours are up-to-date in every respect, even from the highest European standard, both for solidity of construction and facilities for handling freight, whilst at Salina Cruz a dry dock is being constructed which will be 180 metres long and 30 metres wide, with a depth of 9·50 metres below low water.

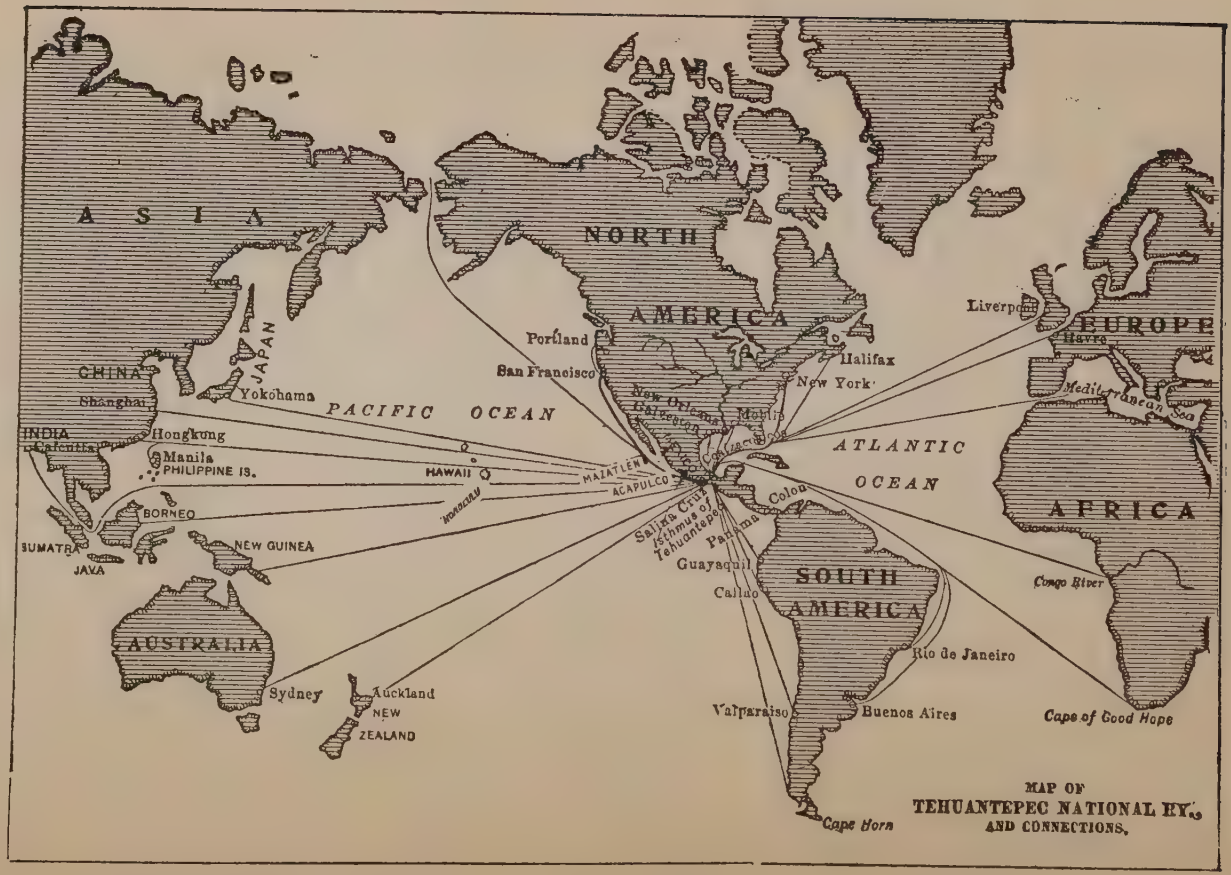
The Tehuantepec Railway is owned by the Mexican Government, but under a contract S. Pearson and Son, Limited, are the managing partners for a period of fifty-one years, the working capital of the partnership being $7,000,000.

The Tehuantepec Railway is now connected at San Geronimo with the Pan American Railway, which is being rapidly extended to Guatemala, and by the Tehuantepec Railway's junction at Santa Lucretia with the Vera Cruz and Pacific Railway; thus railway connection is now established from the Isthmus to Mexico City and New York. This is an important link in the proposed intercontinental system from New York to Buenos Ayres.

The geographical situation of this railway is unique. As stated by Admiral Shufeldt, one of the American Commissioners, the fact that Tehuantepec is nearer the "Axial line" of commerce of the world—Hong Kong, Yokohama, San Francisco, New York, Liverpool—gives this route great advantage over Panama. It will be seen from the small map that there is a saving in distance between Pacific coast ports north of Salina Cruz, and Atlantic coast ports of the United States and Europe, of 1,200 miles in favour of the Tehuantepec route over that of Panama.

The works on the terminal harbours at Coatzacoalcos and Salina Cruz are rapidly nearing completion, and the management confidently expect that transcontinental traffic will be inaugurated on a large scale during 1906.

To show the rapidity with which cargoes can be handled, freight



MAP OF
TEHUANTEPEC NATIONAL RY.
AND CONNECTIONS.

DISTANCES IN NAUTICAL MILES.

	Viâ Tehuantepec.	Viâ Panama.
New York to San Francisco	4,226	5,495
Acapulco	2,363	3,613
Mazatlan	3,017	4,055
Yokohama	8,666	9,835
Honolulu	5,699	6,688
New Orleans to San Francisco	3,091	4,700
Acapulco	1,262	2,861
Mazatlan	1,759	3,458
Liverpool to San Francisco	7,182	8,038
Acapulco	5,274	6,035
Honolulu	8,511	9,263
Yokohama	11,478	12,500

from one ship steaming into a port on the Atlantic can be unloaded, carried by the transcontinental railway and re-deposited in another ship in the Pacific harbour within twenty-four hours.

The Tehuantepec National Railway has made close working arrangements with the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company owning a fleet of steamers with an aggregate cargo capacity of 100,000 tons, by which all freight previously handled by their steamship company viâ the Straits of Magellan will be transported across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. This traffic will average some 400,000 tons per annum.

The contracts with the American-Hawaiian Steamship Company provide for regular services by modern steamers on the Pacific, between the ports of Salina Cruz, San Francisco, and the Hawaiian Islands, and for regular services on the Atlantic, between Coatzacoalcos, New York, Philadelphia and New Orleans, and there will be other connections by regular steamers at the terminals of this railway between Europe and all parts of the world.

General Diaz, ever ready to say the right thing, remarked lately in a public speech that "Long after the present rails were rust the name of Sir Weetman Pearson would be remembered and revered on the Isthmus of Tehuantepec."

According to statistics taken from the report of the Monetary Commission, issued in 1904, the following was approximately the amount of foreign capital invested in Mexico:—

Agricultural, mining, industrial and banking undertakings	$136,107,924
Insurance companies	16,888,490
Railway undertakings	767,151,849
Public debt	432,516,594
	$1,352,664,847

This sum was enormously augmented in 1905.

Given another period of twenty years of peace, there seems no reason to suppose that the rate of increase in the prosperity of Mexico, startling though it has been, will not be exceeded, for not only are there large tracts of agricultural country on the slopes between the high centre table-land and the seas waiting for development and for improved methods of cultivation, but the whole country is rich in minerals, its mountainous regions having been but slightly

explored. According to experts, Mexico will become in the near future one of the greatest copper producers in the world, whereas now the total annual export of copper amounts to little more than £2,000,000. Its development has been very remarkable, and the amount exported has already begun to stamp its influence on international markets. The value of these exports (including copper ore) has been as follows, during the four years :—

1900–1901	$11,77,754
1901–1902	16,849,835
1902–1903	20,122,338
1903–1904	23,234,216
1904–1905	29,803,420

The gold production of Mexico is also increasing ; the gold export in 1902–3 amounted to £1,420,877. More gold mines are being opened each year. But of course silver is still its greatest export, and amounts to about £7,800,000 a year.

Of its agricultural exports the principal are henequen (hempen fibre), amounting for the year ending June 30, 1903, to £3,262,057 ; cattle and horses, £1,300,000 ; and coffee, £902,150—the coffee being as good, or better, than any other in the world. Owing to the variety of climate, Mexico is capable of growing almost anything on the tropical slopes between the table-land and the two oceans, and doubtless will soon produce jute and other material for her mills, instead of having to import as she does now.

Practically every kind of banana, from the large plantain to a small red variety only two inches in length, is to be found in Mexico, and it is probable that within a short space of time the exports to New Orleans and New York and Europe from Coatzacoalcos, Vera Cruz and Tampico will be very large, as the banana is a fruit that carries well. The orange exportation is also considerable, as well as that of peppers, limes, melons, cocoa-nuts, vanilla and hard-woods.

Tobacco is largely grown in the south, where enormous haciendas, or farms, for its production are to be found. I myself saw a child of three smoking a long green cigar. He had that in one hand and a banana in the other, and was enjoying them by turns. His mother explained that he smoked four cigars a day, and that all her children had done the same. Of late the tobacco growers have devoted greater care to the selection of the leaf, and cigars are obtaining higher prices in the markets of the world.

Rubber, which grows wild, is also being cultivated to a large extent,

and in these days of motor cars, when the demand for rubber is so great, it finds a good sale.

Basket work of all kinds is made by Indians, and fine plaiting both in straw and horsehair, like that of the "Panama" hats, is done by them with great skill, and the articles find a brisk trade.

It is much to be regretted that trade with Great Britain has not increased proportionately with the increasing prosperity of the country, and it is difficult to see why this should be so, for the sea freight to England, plus the land freight from Vera Cruz to the capital, only two hundred and sixty-three miles, cannot be as heavy as the long land-freight from the manufacturing centres in the United States.

It is true that the value of the exports to Great Britain has trebled during the last twenty-eight years (from $9,219,837 to $26,764,507), but during that period the bulk of exports to the United States has expanded nearly fourteen-fold (from $10,358,167 to $139,567,083).

Imports from Great Britain have increased in gold value from about £1,700,000 to £2,123,069—in the same period the imports from the United States have increased from £1,100,000 in 1876 to £8,102,909 in 1903, while not less noteworthy, the imports from Germany have increased in a still greater proportion. The Americans, in short, have practically the whole export trade of Mexico in their hands, and one-half of the imports, the United Kingdom coming second, but far behind. Surely England might do something to improve her position. It is true, no doubt, that Mexico imports food-stuffs from the United States, and that we could not compete in that respect, but out of the total imports of £15,000,000 there are many things that could be supplied by Great Britain which are now left to the enterprise of the United States and Germany, our next most formidable rival in Mexico.

From what I am told a good deal of trade might fall to British manufacturers if they would establish agencies for the sale of such goods as winding machines and pumps, which are always being wanted as new mines are being opened up, and kept the goods on the spot—in Mexico itself. The time has gone by when people were disposed to wait until they could order what they wanted from England, and then await the good pleasure of the British manufacturer until he should care to deliver them.

One of the obstructions to the sale of many articles of British manufacture in Mexico is the fact that British salesmen are often only authorised to quote the price of their goods f.o.b., Liverpool, whereas the Americans and Germans give their price to the nearest station to the place of delivery. The American and German catalogues

are better got up, are generally in Spanish, and their salesman speaks that language, and is therefore able to push his wares. America and Germany are getting all the trade and they deserve it.

In the Central Tableland of Mexico many irrigation undertakings have been established, both by private persons as well as by the Government. All kinds of crops and fruits are produced in the country. The production of a few of these during the year 1902 was as follows :—

Rice	18,126,070 kilogrammes	CATTLE.	
Barley.....	2,130,118 hectolitres	Cows	5,142,457
Maize	27,521,808 ,,	Horses.....	859,217
Wheat.....	229,892,752 kilogrammes	Mules	334,435
Sugar cane..	2,745,686,000 ,,	Pigs	616,138
Cotton.....	22,529,407 ,,	Asses	287,981
Cocoa	3,428,525 ,,	Sheep	3,424,430
Tobacco	3,907,311 ,,	Goats	4,706,011

These figures increased greatly in 1905.

One of the greatest wants of Mexico has been fuel. On their arrival in the country the Spaniards began to cut down all the great forests—as was their wont—a proceeding which has made Mexico much drier to-day than formerly. The wood has been even more ruthlessly sacrificed since railways, factories and mines have consumed so much, and that great source of supply has practically come to an end. Coal of a somewhat inferior quality has within the last few years been worked in the north, so that while the locomotives are in some parts run by wood, in others coal is used. With the increase of railway traffic neither proved sufficient. Boring for oil has lately been in progress, with the result that in the southern areas of Mexico wells affording a good yield have been struck, and oil is used as fuel for the engines. This oil has been discovered in Tamulipas, Vera Cruz and Yucatan, and it promises to become a flourishing industry.

Another source of possible wealth, long known but little exploited so far, is diamonds. According to the old papers, at the beginning of the last century when flints for the flint-lock muskets ran short, in the mountains of the southern part of the Sierra Madre round boulders of all sizes, of a reddish colour were found, which, on being broken up to make flints, disclosed diamonds. Subjoined are some statistical tables, showing to what extent foreign nations share in Mexico's trade, and a three years' return of Mexican exports :—

TABLE I.

Value of Imports into Mexico from principal countries during the years 1898-1905.

Country.	Value.			
	1898-99.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.*
	£	£	£	£
United States	4,832,938	8,102,909	8,528,059	9,660,633
United Kingdom	1,842,244	2,123,069	2,005,229	2,083,669
Germany	1,135,585	1,914,802	1,909,933	1,962,107
France	1,183,433	1,307,885	1,494,694	1,696,537
Belgium	141,482	517,955	436,081	286,752
Spain	505,987	606,996	654,299	746,897
Other countries	—	—	—	735,623
Total value of imports from all countries including above... ...	10,173,839	15,180,351	15,672,154	17,172,219

* Figures for 1904-05 are approximate.

TABLE II.

Value of Exports from Mexico to principal countries during the years 1899-1905.

Country.	Value.			
	1898-99.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.*
	£	£	£	£
United States ...	9,923,875	14,377,110	14,153,718	13,498,942
United Kingdom	1,350,768	2,687,857	2,449,146	1,671,989
Germany	385,279	966,005	1,090,041	1,571,988
France...	599,178	365,418	629,770	590,514
Belgium	247,028	589,821	558,914	837,521
Spain	112,412	165,418	240,106	193,431
Other countries ...	652,283	621,268	550,956	1,021,086
Total ...	13,270,823	19,772,897	19,672,651	19,385,471

* Figures for 1904-05 are approximate.

TABLE III.

Value of Mexican Exports in the last four fiscal years, for which returns are available.

Articles.	Value.			
	1901-02.	1902-03.	1903-04.	1904-05.*
	£	£	£	£
Gold—				
Mexican gold coins..	9,572	10,663	10,766	8,591
Foreign ,, ...	7,824	932	292	3,912
In bars	869,882	1,326,427	1,008,465	1,252,862
Slimes, &c.	44,247	82,855	53,128	104,248
Silver—				
Mexican dollars ...	1,135,176	2,109,872	1,867,159	189,989
Foreign coins	25,973	8,554	8,699	7,797
Bars	4,103,796	4,635,739	4,578,810	5,301,401
Slimes, &c.	698,316	1,001,302	1,456,399	1,053,176
Copper	1,684,983	2,012,233	2,323,421	2,980,342
Lead	573,084	566,907	482,563	550,466
Other metals	54,677	118,178	135,918	111,036
Coffee	1,022,885	902,150	867,624	925,678
Henequen	2,920,951	3,262,057	3,152,515	2,938,912
Timber	177,873	183,773	261,856	219,781
Dye woods	128,877	96,401	84,755	69,181
Leaf tobacco	97,587	138,330	189,962	272,536
Other vegetable produce	853,468	1,202,278	1,498,154	1,481,536
Animals, live-stock ...	503,395	700,067	362,554	314,932
Raw hides	628,657	746,648	655,409	673,961
Other animal produce	61,541	79,567	69,168	61,618
Manufactured articles—				
Henequen	148,518	135,565	106,552	4,178
Tobacco	62,646	65,422	34,086	46,544
Other manufactured goods	135,944	312,378	412,169	738,972
Various	47,462	74,587	52,227	73,812
Total...	15,997,334	19,772,885	19,672,651	19,385,471

* Figures for 1904-05 are approximate.

From these figures it is seen that the mineral exportations from Mexico continue to be by far the most important, although the increase is general in every branch.

This financial and industrial success, attained in thirty years, is all practically due to one man, the history of whose life has been written in the previous pages.

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